

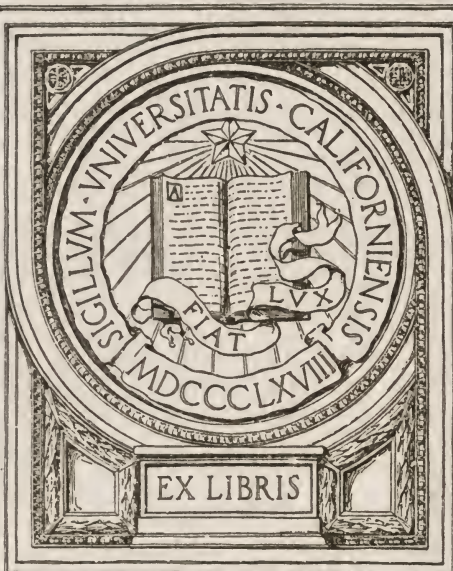
DO THEY REALLY
RESPECT US? & OTHER
ESSAYS

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MARGARET COLLIER GRAHAM

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TO MRS
MARGARET



Margaret-Collier Graham



Margaret Collins Graham

NO. 1111
ANNAPOLIS

DO THEY REALLY RESPECT US?

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

MARGARET COLLIER GRAHAM

AUTHOR OF

STORIES OF THE FOOT-HILLS

SAN FRANCISCO

A. M. ROBERTSON

1912

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PREFACE

Many friends have asked that a sketch of the author's life be included in this posthumous volume, but the editors believe that the following whimsical "Autobiography" will be more satisfactory, as being from Mrs. Graham's own pen, than any account of their own:

I was born in 1850, but this is only hearsay and I hope exaggerated. I have lived ever since though I have been half dead at times. I have lived a good deal and have found it, on the whole, interesting. I have lived in California since 1876 and have in consequence no desire to go to heaven. I have been in love and in debt many times but have always got out. I am afraid of nothing but the newspapers. I have found one thing worth while: friends. And I deeply regret that I have not been able to give the world as much pleasure as it has given me.

Although Mrs. Graham was most widely known as a writer of short

Preface stories, her public addresses have made her name deeply respected in Southern California; and in private life her practical wisdom and ready sympathy helped many men and women to go their ways more happily. She practiced a philosophy more stern than she preached, putting aside afflictions grievous enough to daunt the bravest.

A perusal of the following pages will show that Mrs. Graham's attention was strongly attracted to the almost dramatic transformations that have made the world of today so different from that of her youth, so different, especially, for women. The reader who has observed how far a few years have carried us socially from the last generation will find some aspects of that long swift march here accounted for, perhaps in a new light, by a keen observer, often humorously and always sympathetically. A few of the papers are on literary topics, but literature and life were so inseparable in their author's view that these selec-

tions will be found as full of human interest as the rest. All of the papers are occasional; some of them were prepared for small companies of friends, others for large audiences, but none of them for publication. It was only the requests of many who heard them that finally decided their author to revise a few for printing. But Mrs. Graham's last years were filled with pain, and although she refused to surrender to invalidism her strength sufficed only for immediate affairs. Nevertheless she sometimes mentioned the proposed volume, and it is believed that her intention has been fairly represented.

Mrs. Graham was especially touched by the devotion of one of her young friends who carefully copied and bound the papers here printed, and many others. The dedication of this volume is a recognition of that attachment and is indeed the only detail which the author had definitely planned.

There has been no attempt to edit

Preface the manuscript other than to remove a few ephemeral local allusions, introductory words and certain passages that repeat others found elsewhere.

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DO THEY REALLY RESPECT US?

From the beginning of civilization men have said complimentary things of women. From the last chapter of Proverbs to the last issue of the daily paper we find no lack of pleasant sayings in appreciation of womanly virtues. Indeed this seems to have been a very early custom, for nothing is said of the return made to the virtuous woman of Biblical repute, by her admiring husband, save that "he praises her." This, it appears, has been the coin in which women have been paid for self-sacrifice from the beginning of time.

Now compliment is not the language of equality. There is a suggestion of compensation, or at the best, solace for deprivation in it. Men do not indulge much in it toward each other without arousing suspicion.

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I remember, when a very young girl, hearing a man say, apropos of the departure of some woman from the conventional feminine industrial rut, "I am sure no one respects a woman more than I do, in her proper place"! It had not occurred to me to doubt it before, but the seed thus sown sprouted, and skepticism concerning the respect of man has ever since flourished in my mind.

Really I think the pleasant things which most men say and no doubt think they think concerning women are the result of kindly feeling. Her lot seems to them so unendurable, her condition so unspeakable, that they are constrained to offer her such consolation as lies in their power for the unfairness of fate. Women never find it necessary to assert, much less to insist that they respect men as a sex. Possibly they are more truthful than men, but it is evident that, whatever may be the cause, men do not suffer from this lack of appreciation.

Do not, I pray, misunderstand me.

I am quite willing to acknowledge that men love women, and I know that it is often said that there can be no real love without respect. This latter statement we all know to be false. Mothers and fathers love their children without feeling for them anything approaching deference; parental affection is a mixture of pity, tenderness, hope, pride and selfishness. Sometimes one of these predominates, sometimes another; but in any case the love is real, without a trace of respect.

When a woman is young she tries hard to believe that men mean what they say, but as she grows older and the compliments become rarer she realizes, if at all astute, that it is not woman that man respects, in spite of his protestations, but himself. Just in so far as a woman ministers to his comfort, convenience and progress, he respects, or says he respects her. When she disregards this and seeks, as he always claims the right to do, her own advancement, convenience

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and development, regardless of his, she immediately forfeits his "respect," as he chooses to call it.

Of course there has always been the church to reckon with in the attitude of men toward women; for in spite of the boasted claim that Christianity and the advancement of woman have gone hand in hand, the church has always taught directly the inferiority of woman. As Christianity is thus far the best religion civilization has produced, and as woman has progressed with civilization, just as might has yielded to right in other quarters, the advance of woman and the progress of Christianity have kept pace; but not through direct religious teaching; that, in spite of the efforts of the modern liberal ministry to disguise the fact, has always been outspokenly on the side of man's supremacy and the subjection of woman. We can understand therefore, the attitude of the theologian on this subject and extend to it such consideration as we may individually feel for theology. It is no

doubt even today, though indirectly, an important factor in public opinion, or rather public prejudice; and many a man who has long since deserted the creed of the church, is a devout believer in her teaching still. Not God has decreed it, he says, but Nature.

To exchange for one week his life of freedom, of initiative, of activity for her parasitic, irresponsible, "protected" existence would be to him unbearable, and the only excuse which the average man finds for such rank injustice is in making himself think that "women are different," have different tastes and instincts. "A mother's arm," the callow newspaper reporter assures us, "never tires"; "the heart of a true woman clings more closely to her husband the more cruelly he abuses her"; and other like fictions find, even in sensible men, serious consideration, not to say belief.

As a matter of fact women and men, save for the different tactics inspired by different economic relations, love and hate for the same reasons.

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A man's arm grows tireless when his baby's life depends upon its strength. A woman kisses the fist that fells her if that same fist is to her the only source of supply; but as for loving it—do not deceive yourselves, my brothers, and do not wonder that she is restless under dependence which would gall you beyond endurance, for she is made of the same stuff as yourselves.

Try just for a little to apply to her the same test you apply to yourselves. How frequently we hear it asserted that a poor man who marries a rich woman is placed in a most humiliating position. If marriage were what it should be this would not be true; but since it is what it is, why is not the position of the poor woman who marries a rich man, or a man who becomes rich, equally humiliating? She may strive by a thousand fallacies and mental evasions to escape from the consequences, but she cannot. Men do not respect dependence, and women seem to them dependent. Gen-

erally speaking they are right. They have my sympathy in the lack of respect, but not in their effort to maintain the conditions which produce it, nor in their effort to deceive themselves and her.

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As we grow older we cease to blink the facts. We allow ourselves the privilege of saying what we think. And for some months I have interested myself in gathering together evidence bearing upon this matter. Much of it is circumstantial but often it is refreshingly frank, even ingenuous, and very direct. The following I take from a daily paper.

THE MOTHERS.

No organized body of people could be more welcome in Los Angeles than the Mothers' Congress. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that this organization is the most welcome of any that might come. For, of all the people in the world, there are none to compare with the mothers in our affections, our gratitude and our respect.

This sounds very well. No doubt the man who wrote it believed he was tell-

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ing the truth. But one finds it hard to reconcile with the universal masculine contempt bestowed upon "a mother's boy," "a boy tied to his mother's apron string"; and a childless woman finds her loneliness tempered by the supercilious attitude of the callow youth toward everything feminine: an attitude carefully fostered too often by his father, for boys, let us hope, are not born into the world with a contempt for the women who bear them.

That this contempt is acquired at a very early age, however, we must acknowledge. A woman calling upon a stranger asked the number of her hostess' children. "I have four little boys," was the answer. "Oh," said the visitor sympathetically, "one of your little boys should have been a little girl!" Whereupon one of the small male quartette who was sitting unnoticed in a corner grumbled, "I'd like to know who'd a been 'er! I wouldn't a been 'er, and Tom wouldn't a been 'er, and I'm sure Jack wouldn't!

I'd like to know who'd a been 'er!" A small boy who had two older sisters was congratulated upon the arrival of a little brother and asked if he were glad. "Yes," he said, "if he hadn't come there wouldn't have been anybody but just me!" One could repeat such stories ad nauseam to prove the early development of sex contempt on the part of boys.

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Little girls on the contrary show no corresponding aversion unless now and then when teased. "Tomboy" is not considered a severe form of reproach, in spite of the efforts of grownups, and "a whistling girl" is always rather proud of her accomplishment; little girls take kindly to overalls, and gymnasium suits are not abjured because they make girls look like boys. It is useless to say that this is merely natural sex prejudice; that the contempt is mutual; that the man dislikes womanly traits in a man because they are unmanly; that the terms "effeminate," "womanish," etc., are terms of reproach only when ap-

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plied to men; and that the same reproach is involved in the application of terms suggestive of manly characteristics to woman. This is not true. No woman considers it other than a compliment to be told that she has a "virile" intellect, that she "writes like a man"; and no man who tells her this intends it otherwise. To ascribe any masculine mental trait to a woman is perhaps the highest form of compliment indulged in by men.

We hear much talk in some quarters of the danger which lurks in the feminization—whatever that may be—of various institutions and industries. That men should be molded or governed according to the feminine idea seems to some of the alarmed denizens of these quarters a catastrophe which must result in the destruction of all that is distinctively masculine. If this be true, woman herself has been up to this time suffering from masculinization. She has been educated and governed according to the masculine idea. She has tried with

man's assistance to make herself what he desires. The reward of merit held out to her has always been his approval; the direst calamity that could befall her to fail of his esteem. She has been urged to model herself mind and body upon his wishes. The result has been that anomaly believed to be the womanly woman but in reality the masculinized woman; the woman not as God made her but as man has made her. Man, who is so afraid of feminization that he cannot trust his delicate and susceptible nature in the same classroom with women without jeopardizing his mental sex, has not hesitated to subject her presumably more sensitive intelligence to endless counsels, dictation and warning, until we have every reason to believe that the original woman has entirely disappeared.

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Having in early life observed this universal contempt for femininity, I set about seeking the cause. Naturally, since physical inferiority as a reason was hardly to be predicated of civil-

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ized man, I decided that in the process of evolution we had not yet reached mental equality with men. Indeed in my youth there were those who ventured to assert that women were naturally inferior. To dispel this, of course women set about improving themselves. The matter seemed simple enough: "They do not respect us," I said, "because we are ignorant; when we acquire learning it will be otherwise." Imagine then my surprise to learn, as I did recently, that the disrespect for femininity is far deeper seated than this; to read in a well-known and highly respectable magazine the following:

It is the general opinion of educational experts that in the higher schools more men teachers are needed. This is not because the pupils of men teachers pass better examinations than the pupils of women teachers; it is because the masculine element is needed in the educational community; because, for example, the average boy, if he is taught only by women, comes to regard scholarship as a purely feminine accomplishment and look upon it with something like contempt.

This was in the Outlook.

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In other words instead of feminine scholarship increasing the boy's respect for women, it merely gave him a contempt for scholarship! This would certainly indicate a sex-antipathy far deeper seated than we have supposed.

It has been the fashion, in America at least, to disguise this condition of affairs; but now and then even the American man "speaks up." Witness that representative of the New York Schoolmen who appeared before the Legislature at Albany to oppose the McCarren-Conklin bill for equal pay for equal work on the part of women teachers. There is a refreshing frankness in the way in which he cast aside all this hollow mockery of compliment and gave twelve reasons against equalizing salaries, the first of which was "his own personal superiority to any woman"! Other minor reasons were: that "no woman can uplift spiritually nor can she come up to man's ideals"; that "women have done nothing for education"; that "equal work means

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equal ability"; that "men exert a man's influence, while a woman can exert only a woman's influence"; etc. It is said that the senators and representatives gasped as they listened to him, whether from surprise at his statements or at his candor we are not informed. The editor of the magazine from which I learned these facts says in conclusion: "Respect for women is one of the first things to be inculcated in the American boy, since respect for women is a quality which springs from the American ideal, and one of which Americans have always been justly proud."

The means taken to inculcate this respect are various. I read the other day in a serious article on Longfellow written by a well-known scholar that, "he had an exasperating way of observing certain conventional duties like an old woman." Did any woman ever dream of using the expression, "like an old man," as a term of reproach to be applied to one of her own sex?

Women, I must confess, assume a cheerful callousness to this form of habitual contempt, even though by no means indifferent to it. Some of them share it, or pretend to share it in a very palpable effort to appear "virile." There is no way in which a weak woman is more likely to try to strengthen her position with men than by slurs upon her own sex—not upon individuals, that is always ascribed to jealousy and is a tacit compliment to masculinity, but upon women. And the fact that she gains with men by underrating women proves that at heart men do not respect women.

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Why is it the crowning disgrace of a small boy's existence to be mistaken for a girl? Why are girls' clothes considered a by-word and a scoffing? Why does so sincere and gentle a writer as Benson say, "What a wretched thing in English it is that there is no female of the word 'man'! 'Woman' means something quite different and always sounds slightly disrespectful"? Why do we hear it said

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repeatedly that it is a great pity for a girl to be plain, but that good looks in a man are rather undesirable than otherwise? Is personal appearance, then, a woman's entire stock in trade? Are men so stupid as not to see the covert insult in this, and are women so hardened to insult as not to feel it?

The average Englishman's position in this matter is easy to understand. An interesting series of articles in *Nineteenth Century and After*, contains some statements which have the merit of frankness if not of modesty. The articles are on the subject of political representation. American men, certainly the educated class, however opposed to the extension of the suffrage to women, are always ready to assert that when women desire it, the right should be granted to them. But this Englishman removes all coating of sugar from the bitter pill; after setting forth the position of the opposition thus:

They welcome the exercise, more and more, of consultative and advisory functions, by rea-

sonable and thoughtful women, in the country's concerns; they welcome the presentation of grievances and the suggestion of remedies by those toiling thousands of women upon whom rests so much of the physical burthen of life. But they *are convinced that the last word in all these matters ought to rest with men—even as God has made man "the head of the woman."*

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He adds:

Lastly (if I may presume to give my impressions in that respect), I believe that the great majority of Englishmen would, for their part, hold these views if the question of women's suffrage were fairly and squarely put before them. Miss Stephen suggests a Referendum to women. *It would be interesting, but I do not think it ought to be decisive.* My whole contention is that the matter is for men to decide, whether by Referendum or by our old-fashioned method of a General Election. If I am right in believing my countrymen are against women's suffrage, I earnestly hope they will have the courage of their convictions, and resist it, *no matter with what volume of female voices it may be demanded.*

Even a woman can understand this. And even an American woman realizes the futility of interfering with God, however much she may object to

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acknowledging that an Englishman is better acquainted with the Almighty's intentions concerning her than she is herself. But candidly there is something to take hold of in such statements. They help a woman to know where she is. The theory and practice of the Englishman seem perfectly consistent, whereas those of her own countrymen are full of bewildering contradictions. Do you wonder that at times she accuses the latter of duplicity and longs to get at his real convictions?

Personally I believe I am actuated in this investigation by purely scientific motives. I do not say that I should be guided by male opinion, but it would be interesting to know what it is. Why is womanhood esteemed a curse? Is it because men are at heart physical cowards and shrink from the suffering that accompanies maternity? I cannot believe it. Is it because of the limitations which they have so constantly urged upon women? Then why in the name of

justice are they not eager so far as in them lies to remove those limitations?

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I read somewhere recently the statement by a man who represented a fair literary average, that if one could get at the truth there was not a man living who did not consider himself the superior of any woman, merely by virtue of his sex. I can imagine that men might find it embarrassing to confess this, and might hide their embarrassment under a pretended flippancy; but I cannot imagine why, since sex is not a matter of choice, they should be so cruelly indifferent to the disadvantages which beset femininity; should seem to try to make themselves think that they have made up to women by certain privileges which would mean less than nothing to themselves: by granting them, in other words, immunity from everything which makes life worth living to them.

There has always been to me something incomprehensible in the

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anxiety of men to avoid everything, no matter how strong their taste therefor, which savors of the taint of woman's work. Not long ago a man whose eyes troubled him and made it impossible for him to follow his profession of architecture closely, or to read or write constantly, who was not strong enough and really did not care for outdoor sports, and who was not obliged to earn a living, confessed to me that he envied women their many forms of tasteful handicraft. He did not say it, but both of us knew, that he was prevented only by the reproach attending it from acquiring and practising one of these household arts.

The good qualities generally ascribed to men, when found in women are always highly esteemed. Courage, a judicial mind, self-reliance, chivalry, even physical bravery and, in these days, athletic skill are much lauded in women. But I believe most men consider it at best a doubtful compliment to be accused of gentleness, of tenderness, of self-sacrifice, of modesty, of

pure mindedness, of personal virtue, or indeed of any womanly trait. Fortunately many men possess these qualities, and their shamefacedness concerning them is only a part of the sex-antipathy so strangely felt toward women, and apparently not by them.

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I am not blind to the logical conclusion from all this. Men are supposed to be reasonable beings, and if they do not respect us no doubt they have their reasons. I know that someone is lying in wait to tell me that we have brought this upon ourselves; that time was when womanhood was highly esteemed, etc. But this is not true. There has never been a time when gibes and sneers and manly contumely have not been showered upon everything pertaining to femininity. Indeed I am disposed to think that in America and today we fare better in this respect than in any place at any time in the history of civilization. The reasons for this condition of mind are not therefore of recent origin. Possibly they may be in the nature of

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things, but the fact that there has been some change for the better in the attitude of man leads us to hope. And to do him justice I have at times felt that, all things considered, he is not entirely blamable. I have now and then seen what appeared to be, or at least to indicate, a praiseworthy effort on his part to mend his ways: like the man who, when fined for contempt of court, said, "Your honor, I have never expressed any contempt for this court; on the contrary I have carefully concealed my feelings." Even this is hopeful; and when we consider some of the obstacles we have placed in his way, I am constrained to think he has done fairly well.

I am willing to confess that if there were upon the earth a creature who was willing to give up her name, her occupation and her home for me; to let me decide her place of residence, her employment and her income; who allowed herself to be given to me by a religious form; who promised publicly to obey me—I might love her

(considering the direful strait she must have been in to have come to this, heaven knows I should try!), but by no superhuman effort of the will could I thoroughly respect her, or have for her any real feeling of equality. If, added to this, I should see her mincing about on absurdly high-heeled shoes, wearing upon her head a tray of calico flowers and artificial poultry representing the fauna and flora of all climes, her bare arms and neck showing chill and blue through a film of lace—I am very certain that I should think disrespectful things even if I did not say them.

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Mr. Henry James (do not be alarmed: I am not going to quote him) speaks of the abdication of man in America, and the Nation in reply says some very true and rather mortifying things concerning the social inferiority of the American man or, more properly, concerning the social preëminence of the American woman. This latter, it is asserted, in no way reflects or proves anything as to the

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superior energy or acquirements of woman herself, but merely indicates "the first need of the industrial male conqueror, which is to display his financial power through conspicuous leisure." As he does not care for leisure himself, as he hates personal show and has no desire for travel and fine clothes, and as these are to the business-man only the means of displaying his success, he decks his womankind out and sends them forth to herald his financial triumph. If this is true, and it has an uncomfortable air of truth, it may also be true, as the article further states, that "male ascendancy is as real and at least as strong in America as in any European country short of Turkey."

American men insist that they are proud of American women, and I cannot believe that in all of them this pride is merely a form of self-love; that their position is represented by the merchant who would disdain to make a display by arraying himself in his own wares, but does not hesitate to

fill his window with wax-figures thus adorned. Assuredly there are in America men who take a reasonable pride in the actual accomplishments of woman. I do not think many of them are afraid of being distanced in the mental or business world by her; indeed the fear they express is generally that of woman's competition making it impossible for them to support her in idleness: a consummation devoutly to be hoped for, and one which she certainly ought to welcome as preferable to supplying the need of "the industrial male conqueror" to display his financial power: a position hardly to be coveted by a self-respecting woman, and one not calculated to command the respect of man.

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Probably most of us get in this life what we deserve. We may inspire love, but we must compel respect; and possibly many of us, both men and women, are quite satisfied with love—prefer it, indeed. Yet so long as some men have both, I cannot but believe that there are many women who feel

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aggrieved that only one should be within their reach.

Possibly the respect of men is not unattainable. If it depends upon circumstances over which they and we have no control it is really of little value; and if to acquire it we must, as sometimes appears, excite their envy, the question arises whether it is worth while, whether it is not better to be contented with our present discontent—to prefer being right to being president. This latter is, I think the state of mind of most “contented” women. But there is a large class who still feel a shock when they are brought face to face with the fact that nothing they can do or be will save them from perpetual insult based upon the mere fact of womanhood.

SOCIAL MENDICANTS

It is much to be regretted that the Psalmist was in such haste when he said that all men are liars. While he was in the mood there were so many other equally true and forcible things that he might have said, things that are not considered exactly polite or even safe in our day, but which it would have been a great relief to have had said for us in terse and classic English upon which the copyright has long since expired. For instance, if he had not been pressed for time, he might have added that all women are beggars.

Of course there are beggars and beggars; and for purposes of classification the gentler, weaker, more virtuous, beautiful and altogether superior—in short, *the* sex—might be divided into primary and secondary beggars. The primary beggars are a

small and very uninteresting class, who beg directly for themselves. It is as secondary beggars—beggars for others—that Woman rises to her full height, assumes, as it were, her largest and most imposing W. To put it more briefly, there is beggary as a curse and beggary as a career. It is to this latter point that I wish principally to draw your attention.

As soon as a true woman is certain she has escaped the curse she makes haste to enter upon the career. She begins, of course, with clothes, preferably men's clothes; and, as usual, the brunt of her self-sacrifice falls heavily upon those nearest and dearest to her. She begs of her bachelor friends in a cursory intermittent way, necessarily limited by her knowledge of their wardrobes. But the husband of her heart—imagine the state of that man!

Time was when the frugal wife who leaned forward while her husband was telling her earnestly and with statesmanlike fervor of the workings of the League for Better

City Government, and lightly rubbed her forefinger over a slight abrasion on the elbow of his coatsleeve, aroused in her lord visions of a work-basket, a silver thimble and delicate and skilful darning while he read the evening paper with a crocheted afghan about his shoulders. But this was Solomon's time, not ours. The modern husband knows better. When the companion of his joys bends toward him and gently laying her hand upon his knee, where a scarcely perceptible gloss is beginning to manifest itself, says, "Thomas, don't you think this suit is beginning to look quite old and scuffed?" he knows that the fate of that suit is sealed. As a matter of fact it is not at all old; indeed it is just beginning to fit him comfortably. The aggressive newness has but just left it and the coat has acquired a graceful slouch about the shoulders that makes him feel quite like a millionaire. But none of these things move her. Resistance is worse than useless. Long experience has told him that that cov-

etous glitter in his wife's eye can have but one result. The place that knoweth that coat now will soon know it no more forever.

Of course a woman in this state of mind is bound to go from bad to worse. She that gloats over moth-holes in last winter's overcoats and rejoices wantonly in shrinkages caused by dyeing is never safe. It is but a short step from beggary to theft.

I was informed no more than a month ago by an honorable gentleman, a man who bears, one might say, a national reputation for veracity, that he had been prevented from attending numerous high social functions by the fact that the wife of his bosom had given away the trousers that belonged to his evening suit. I had often missed him from these scenes of mad festivity, but the real pathos of his absence had never appealed to me before. This same sufferer, with a tear glistening on his eyelash, told me also of another man, a friend of his, a retired army officer,

whose wife during a slight indisposition of her husband that confined him to his bed for a few days, had given away his entire wardrobe, thus reducing him at one fell swoop to that destitution in which her philanthropic soul rejoiced. Whether she then went out and begged old clothes for him from other men I forgot to inquire, but I presume she did.

There are men in this community, reputable and honest citizens, who scratch the lapels of their coats and edge into alleys and around corners when they see certain benevolent persons approaching. Men have confided these things to me, not, I trust, because I am unwomanly or lack the true feminine spirit, but because I live in the country, where poverty is unknown, where we spend the larger part of our time in humbly imploring the needy to come and work for us, and most of our income in paying them when they decide that it is too

Being thus fortunately situated, I have never been known to ask a man for his cloak, thus arousing in him a fear that I would some day take his coat also; and as a consequence men have felt a degree of security concerning the temporary safety of their wardrobes in my presence, which has led to many piteous and touching recitals.

Indeed at times we have mingled our tears, for, while most women have a preference for men's clothes—I beg you not to misunderstand me—there are exceptions, and I have at times trembled for the safety of a gown grown dear from long association. Only the other day I seated myself in a streetcar near a woman of well-known and deep-dyed philanthropy. I saw her start when I sat down, and fix her eyes upon my sleeves, which were, alas! a season too large. And instantly I felt her rip those sleeves out and make of them two pairs of knee-pants for Mrs. Moriarty's twin boys. Then she leaned back a little, to

see if there was sufficient fullness in the skirt to warrant a hope of a waist and petticoat for the second girl. And just as I was hesitating as to whether it was my duty to tell her that I had a yard and a half of the goods at home which the dressmaker had induced me to purchase for fear sleeves would increase in size, the conductor called my street. I gathered my skirts about me and scuttled past her as I left the car, and when I landed on the street and saw her still eyeing me greedily from the window, I felt that I had made, if not a hairbreadth, at least a front-breadth escape. No one knows, no one can know, what fear is until he has fathomed the benevolence of a thoroughly good woman.

It is not generally known that it is feminine dread of debt which lies at the basis of this universal beggary of women. All good women have a horror of debt. Now with men debt is a pastime, an amusement. A man who is out of debt feels like a fish out of water. A man means to pay his debts,

of course, and very often he does. But he doesn't pay them until he has the money, or can borrow it. Now a woman pays her debts, in money if she can, if not she pays them in tears and blood. They are not her debts, she is theirs.

It is to this belief of woman in the moral quality of debt that much masculine suffering is to be attributed. Possibly there is a business-man who would dare go home at night and say incidentally to his wife, "My dear, when I was in the bank today borrowing a couple of thousand dollars I saw . . ." etc.; but I doubt it. He would shrink before the awful look of reproach in that good woman's face. He would know that every evening thereafter she would look him in the eye and say, "Thomas, have you paid back that money?" All his assets would shrink into nothingness before that one appalling liability. What seemed to him at the time a trifling business exigency would come to appear a crime, and by and by in sheer

self-defense he would go to another bank and borrow the money that he might pay the debt and answer her in the affirmative.

Now, this wholesome horror of debt on the part of good women is the safety of the church and the bulwark of revealed religion. I trust you will bear with me, my sisters, while I elucidate this matter.

All churches, viewed from the outside, are in a chronic state either of erecting a new edifice or paying for the old one. There must be a great deal of fun in building a church. I am assured of this because men show such a lively interest in it from the beginning, and men, generally speaking, are good fellows. There is no denying the fact that they are the humorous sex; they know how to have an all-round good time.

First, there is selecting and buying the lot. There are agents and commissions and abstracts and flaws and tax-titles and options and agreements and deeds and suits to quiet title—all

of which have been the playthings and amusements of men from the beginning of time. Then there are the architects and the plans and specifications, and the elevation (I notice the elevation always comes first and the depression later), and here even the women begin to see the fun. They all gather around the table and look at the drawings, with the shrubbery growing so permanently in the front yard, and the grass of that peculiar seductive shade of green always used by architects; and the women going up the front steps holding their parasols in the military manner which no one but an architect can understand.

And after they have admired the elevation the women retire into the background again and everything goes merrily forward among the men. There are contracts and sub-contracts and bondsmen and material and mechanics' liens—and the new structure rises proudly in the air, while the building committee run hither and thither and rub their hands in glee.

About the time the building is enclosed something seems to dampen their ardor. Perhaps it is the plaster, or it may be the lack of plaster. I am not very certain as to the details, but after a while they call a congregational meeting. The pastor announces it for Thursday night and he hopes for a large attendance, as matters of grave importance to the congregation and the cause of religion at large are to be considered.

Of course everybody goes. The minister comes in rather late, looking pale and tired, and sits with his elbow on his knee and his head on his hand, two or three fingers gleaming amid his dark locks very effectively. The building committee whisper solemnly together in the corner, with heavy lines on their brows. And presently the chairman reads his report, which ends: "We are therefore fifteen thousand dollars in debt, and this amount must be raised before we can worship in this sacred structure with consciences void of offense." He sits

down with a slight cough of embarrassment, and the women fall back in their seats with a concerted gasp.

There is a solemn stillness, broken only by a deep sigh from the minister. Then a slender woman in the front row rises and says, with a tremor of decision in her voice, "My friends, this debt must be paid; this money must be raised." At her last word every feminine spine in the room stiffens, and every woman raises her chin and sniffs the battle from afar.

The men glance slyly at each other from under their drawn brows, and with difficulty refrain from chuckling outright. The minister raises his head and beams with delight and approval upon the sisters. The chairman of the building committee springs to his feet and exclaims, "God bless the ladies—it will be done!"

And it is done. Men, poor creatures, sometimes know how to earn money, but it takes a woman to raise money. If you had told those women they must earn fifteen thousand dol-

lars, with interest at six per cent, in as many years, nervous prostration would have become epidemic in that congregation. If you had told any one of them that within a year she would be selling popcorn-crisp from a tissue-paper booth on Broadway for a living, she would have fallen in a swoon at your feet. If you had told her that before six months had passed she would be a decorator, standing all day on a stepladder with her head tipped back at an angle of forty-five degrees, she would have shrieked with dismay. If you had told her that ere long she would be conducting a lottery and evading the police, she would have laughed you to scorn. If you had told her that before Christmas she would be begging in the streets for herself and her children she would have committed suicide.

And yet, to pay church debts, women have done all these things and more. Children have been organized in bands and sent from house to house to sell tickets for something utterly

beyond their comprehension. Young people have been encouraged to assist in nameless devices for extorting money from an unwilling public. And in the face of this there are people who insist that the church is a conservator of morals, and who wonder why beggary is on the increase among us and pauperism rapidly becoming respectable.

It is one thing to beg for those who are or who think they are or whom we think are in want. But when religion goes a-begging, and begging for luxuries—for steeples and velvet cushions and silver communion-services and axminster carpets and carved pulpit-chairs and stained-glass windows—then either beggary has become respectable or the church has lost its respectability.

A plain statement of the needs of any cause that seems to us worthy, placed before the public or before individuals who may not have heard of it, is entirely different from that personal appeal and importunity which

takes the matter out of the realm of conscience and judgment and makes the gift an unwilling compromise with our lower instead of our better selves. That is the charity of which Emerson wrote, "Though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold."

Another class of beggars are those that beg for influence they could never acquire or for work they have not the skill to do. I was called from the writing of this paper by a young woman who said she desired my assistance in getting work. She brought a card of introduction from a friend in another city who pronounced her reliable and of good family, saying that her father had met with reverses and it was necessary for her to find employment. The young woman was twenty-two years of age. Her hat was almost as large as a hearse and similarly decorated: six tall plumes on the outside and floral decorations below. She said

she wanted employment, but I soon discovered that what she really wanted was a salary. She expressed some vague fear that she might be inconvenienced in obtaining a situation by the fact that she didn't know how to do anything at all, but altogether she was disposed to think this of small importance and cheerfully asserted her willingness to take any kind of place "except of course to do housework in a family"—she would not like to do that. When I hinted that this was the only kind of work for which there is a permanent demand she said yes, she supposed it was. After a little urging she confessed a willingness to be companion to a lady. I told her it was not often a woman desired a companion who knew absolutely nothing—that was a peculiarity of men. But perhaps some invalid—oh, she couldn't take care of an invalid; she never had any knack about sickness. And so forth. Any woman can reproduce the conversation from memory. The girl had absolutely nothing to offer but

what she called a willingness to work—a state of mind that numerous philanthropists have decided is all that can be expected of more than half of our population and which has a right to have work provided for it. In other words the young woman was a beggar, save that she begged for an opportunity to receive in exchange for her ignorance instead of honestly asking alms.

We have many varieties of such mendicants among us, whom I shall call, for purposes of classification, the Ignorers of the Demand.

When an ordinary level-headed mortal decides upon an occupation he selects something that he thinks he can do and that he thinks people want done. This would seem a simple enough proposition to those untainted with genius or even talent. But the particular type of beggar last mentioned, and for brevity I shall call him the Ignorer, directs his entire attention to deciding what he would like to do.

Two of these called upon me a few days ago. They also were young women. One of them was an elocutionist. Now some people are born elocutionists, some become elocutionists, but nearly everybody has elocution thrust upon him. I never heard of any demand for an elocutionist; I never knew anyone to advertise for an elocutionist; I never saw an item in the first newspaper of a boom town read: "What we need in our rapidly growing city is a good, live, all-round reader and reciter." Nevertheless, this young woman had studied elocution. She gesticulated in curves; her voice rose and fell in curves, and it was a very girlish voice, fresh and sweet. She desired me to act as patroness of a reading and recital to be given in a hotel parlor. Her friend was a musician. Now I never patronize elocution, and so I said, modestly I hope, that my name was of no importance but, having borne it more years than I cared to mention, I preferred not to use it without knowl-

edge, and as I had never had the pleasure of hearing her friend play, I could hardly advise other people to hear her. To be truthful, I began to say "hearing her read," but suddenly there darted through my mind the fear that she might then and there drop upon one knee and in frenzied tones adjure me that Curfew Must Not Ring Tonight. As I have never wished to ring the curfew, nor at any time used my influence to have it rung, nor ever known anyone who desired to ring it, and think, indeed, the general feeling is decidedly with the negative, I have never been able to account for the agonized pleading of so many young women against it. Naturally one objects to being nagged about a thing he has no intention of doing, and I have therefore become sensitive about the curfew and decidedly averse to the subject.

So, although I do not shine as a musical critic, I felt safer in the hands of the musician, more specially as she was a violinist and was without her

violin. But the young woman triumphantly produced their list of patronesses and assured me that "all the best and wealthiest ladies of Pasadena were interested," a statement in which they were undoubtedly borne out by their list. Indeed, I felt that a full attendance of patronesses would crowd the hotel parlors to suffocation and bar out an eager public; and, with such tact as I could command, I again declined to allow my name to be used. Whereupon the elocutionist arose and in her grandest manner informed me that "some people were obliged to earn their living by their talents" and she considered it very selfish for those who were not, to stand in their way.

I wondered vaguely, after they were gone, if the poor things really thought they were earning their living—begging for patronage, for influence, for help at every turn, supplying an unfelt want and taking the time of numbers of busy women to ask of them a favor—often unwillingly granted. By what perversion of the

mind did it ever come to be considered more honorable than household service?

Social
Mendicants

But the Ignorers are not all women. A young man called at my house during the early summer. I knew him as the son of a minister: a man who had insisted upon studying theology against the advice of his friends, possessing no qualifications for his chosen profession and a consequent failure therein. The boy was thus of the second generation of Ignorers. He wished to sell me a book. He said very little about the book, it is true, but urged that he was trying to earn a little money during vacation to help him along with his education, and he thought I would be willing to assist him. After this plea he produced the volume. I examined it and told him it was a book I would not buy under any circumstances. He intimated that my name would be of use to him in the neighborhood, etc. The youth, the ignorance, the pathos of the boy ought to have protected

him from a lecture, but it did not. I told him precisely what I thought of the book: a hotch-potch of ill-arranged matter, made to sell to ignorant people. I drew his attention to the fact that he had begun by reciting his own needs and endeavoring to enlist my sympathy. And just as I was warming to the subject and showing him exactly how he could earn an honest living and save himself the mortification of begging, he evidenced a desire to depart. Whether it was anxiety to adopt my counsel or to escape it I am unable to say, but as I saw him a few minutes later entering a neighbor's house I fear it was the latter.

Then there are the artists, the men and women who decide to paint pictures because they like it better than anything else, and then berate the rest of us because we are not willing to pay them two hundred dollars for an afternoon's work! Now I have nothing whatever to say against two hundred or two thousand dollars for an

afternoon's work if talent has made the artist's time so valuable that he can get it. If a man thinks his pictures worth five hundred dollars apiece he has the right to hold them at that price until somebody else thinks so. But he must not talk superciliously of the failure of western people to appreciate art. The fact is that very few people anywhere know much about the value of pictures. Nor does it argue a lack of taste. In literature one may be finely appreciative without having the faintest idea concerning the market value of what he is reading; and it is much the same with pictures.

When a Miss or Mrs. or Mr. in a studio is spoken of among your friends as "really very hard up" and you are adjured to go and buy something from her or him, and you go modestly with your last five-dollar gold-piece in your purse and stand politely looking about, with your hands clasped in such a way as to hide the worn places in your gloves, wondering if you can

get on this winter with your old jacket freshened up with new passementerie, feeling a trifle thankful that your gown is long in front and hides the shabbiness of your best shoes—does it ever strike you as very, well, remarkable that the little sketch, six by eight inches, of bare tree-trunks against a red sky, with two blue boulders and a little graduated green spread in a slightly malarial manner toward the lower left-hand corner, should be worth twenty-five dollars? I am willing to confess that I have indulged in these inartistic reflections on numerous occasions, and at times I have seen others who seemed to me to be struggling with questions of economics when they should have been giving their souls exclusively to art.

It is impossible to remember all the mendicants who come to one's door masquerading in the garb of industry. And even if it were possible time would fail me to tell of the solicitors for subscribers to the Ladies'

Home Drivel who intend to study music on the proceeds; of the young newspaper reporters who beg you for items concerning the private lives of yourselves and others which you consider out of place in public print, because, as they plead, "it is their bread and butter"; of the agents desiring a written order for the same brand of baking-powder you are using, that they may obtain a commission for "introducing" it; of the old man selling pointless needles with a wooden leg (I speak advisedly); and all the countless horde of people who deceive themselves or try to deceive themselves, and us, into thinking that they are earning a living. Certainly it is better than tying up one's foot in a pillow and standing beside the City Hall steps begging people to buy collar-buttons; but I for one never feel virtuous after purchasing something I do not want and can ill afford, and thus keeping up a false demand.

Did I say never? Let me make an exception of the old woman who sold

pencils from house to house, and when asked if it was not rather hard for one of her age to walk so much, and interrogated concerning her children, replied: "Yes, I have a daughter I could live with, but she has two children growing up and I'd rather sell pencils than take their sass!"

If the real industries were crowded; if we were overrun with good house-servants and skilful men to do odd jobs; if hired men were like Jonas in the Rollo books; if, in short, everything we really want done were well and abundantly done, one might excuse himself for conniving at beggary and helping to keep it within the pale of respectability. But few of the things that the comfort of life depends most upon are really well done. And in view of this fact, it might be better for us to reduce the work of life as rapidly as possible to its legitimate place, and to this end not only call a spade a spade but oblige a large number of those otherwise occupied at present to learn its use.

SOME IMMORTAL FALLACIES

If any good results to a man from believing a lie, it certainly comes from the honesty of his belief. As soon as suspicion of untruth obtains a hold in his mind, the value of the lie departs. When a man says, "I had rather believe so and so," he is reposing on an air-cushion with the stopper left out; sooner or later his comfort in it will vanish. In view of this it is questionable whether one is justified in attacking old and apparently harmless beliefs. Most of us have acquired an accumulation of views which we have accepted either in good nature or in self-defense, just as a man accepts the theory that his wife makes good bread, because nothing would be gained by denying it. He means that the bread is good for *him*.

However, it seems fitting that we should go over some of these time-

worn ideas and see if any of them are threadbare enough to give to the poor. I say give to the poor because there is no danger of their being discarded by everybody. There are many new ways of looking at things, but there is no dearth of those who prefer to look at everything in the old way, and no one need be afraid to throw aside an opinion which he once found comfortable, but which now appears to him rather shabby and old-fashioned, for fear the world may lose the comfort it once gave him. There are far more people standing around waiting for conventional commonplaces than there are people discarding them. Unless you are made on a mental plan quite unique, your old clothes will fit somebody and perhaps furnish him a Sunday suit.

Nor is there any need of shivering at the thought of changing one's views. Now and then we hear people say, "Oh, I should be perfectly miserable if I did not believe" this or that. But this is entirely illogical. If I

could take away your belief (which I cannot) before you had ceased to believe it, your apprehension might be well founded. Certain snakes, I have understood, shed their skins annually (or rather, I have been told; I never understood it). Now this is a very different matter from being skinned alive. We can imagine the ripple of horror which must pass through the half-grown serpent when he learns from his elders that he will sometime lose his epidermis; when the time comes he is, no doubt, glad to be rid of it. But in shedding our cherished old theories we have consolations that are denied the beasts that perish. We know that they will be seized by the man behind us as the very latest thing out, and that he will extract from them all the warmth and comfort that they once gave us.

One may therefore say of opinions, that they are not lost but gone behind. No one need be afraid, then, as he mounts to the heaven of truth on the wings of progress, to drop his mantle

as he rises. There will always be some Elisha standing about, ready to assume it and become famous thereby.

I am prompted to these consolatory remarks by the fear that before I have finished I may attack some belief dear to the heart of some reader, and I wish it distinctly understood that I do not intend to destroy those beliefs. Most of them, indeed, are practically indestructible. Some of them have become imbedded in our language and their extirpation would call for radical changes in our vocabulary.

Take for instance "old-maidish," a word founded on the universal belief that persons who, in the providence of God and the improvidence of man, have reached a certain or an uncertain age without finding anyone whom they enjoy differing with, to the exclusion of all others, are prim, precise, proper, and mentally and morally rectilinear. Now in examining the basis of this belief we are forced to acknowl-

edge that the facts are against it. Nearly all, if not quite all, of the "old-maidish" people of our acquaintance are married, while the maiden ladies and the bachelors, take them all in all, are an easy-going, readily adaptable, fit-in-any-place sort of people, who might perhaps have become set in their ways if they had ever been permitted to have any, but who have been so hustled about by their married kin that they have sometimes been forced into matrimony in the hope of having their own way at last: a hope which too often fails of realization by reason of a similar motive on the part of the other high contracting party.

If you will call to mind the two or three most exact, fastidious and particular men and women you have ever known, you will find they were all married. This is of course a rude shock to the ancient and honorable theory, but the seeker after abstract truth must be prepared for shocks and throw all his preconceptions to the winds.

Less than a century ago a girl of sixteen was commonly considered and referred to as a woman, and all the childishness and crudity that such immaturity involved was assumed to be characteristic of her sex. These characteristics attached themselves not only to the masculine but also the feminine idea of woman. They have become a part of common speech, inso-much that "effeminate" has become a term of reproach, and women have staggered along under the belief that all the things the world has said of them are the result of careful observation and must be true. They, or many of them, believe that they are malicious, envious and spiteful because they have heard from infancy of feminine spite, feminine jealousy and the like. When a man is malicious it is plain malice, without sex. No one ever heard of petty masculine spite. We respect the individuality even of a mean man, and allow that he is mean because he chooses to be. But a woman is coerced by her sex; her sins

are all feminine, and are saddled upon the rest of us until, really, the burden is becoming greater than we can bear.

What would become of the self-respect of the ordinary man if, in addition to his own shortcomings, he were nagged by having all the sins of the decalogue ascribed to him by virtue of his masculinity? How would it strike a modest man to hear Mr. Bombast accused of "masculine vanity," or an honest man to hear of Mr. Steele arrested for "masculine dishonesty," or a tender-hearted man to read of a lynching as a display of "masculine cruelty"? Would they not one and all weep and howl for the miseries thus heaped upon them? And is it not possible that after two or three hundred years of hearing these things, they might reason somewhat in this fashion: "Vanity, forging and lynching are characteristic of man; I am a man; therefore I am vain, dishonest and bloodthirsty"? This will, I think, account quite logically for the views

that women often express concerning capitalized Woman.

Take the matter of jealousy as to personal attractions, and unwillingness to acknowledge beauty in other women, which is one of the most generally accepted feminine weaknesses. Now all women know that women are peculiarly susceptible to beauty in other women, that they talk about it with unbounded enthusiasm, and take unlimited satisfaction in the contemplation of a charming face. Indeed any beautiful woman will tell you, and even moderately plain women will tell you, that their personal attractions have always been more ardently appreciated by women than by men. A beautiful girl, possessed of the ordinary graces of mind, has the same advantage in making her way among strangers of her own sex that she has among men.

And this brings us face to face with another fallacy unquestioningly accepted by most of us, namely, that personal beauty is an extremely po-

tent factor in a woman's success. That it is an important factor in her *life* can hardly be questioned, but whether its influence is toward her success is a question which the observation of each of us, honestly given, will, I think, tend to answer in the negative. Of course the dangers of failure and unhappiness attending the possession of great beauty are like the cares and troubles of great wealth — most of us would risk being crushed by them. And in spite of the fate of the beauties we have known it is highly probable that parents will go on hoping that their sons may grow rich and their daughters beautiful, to the end of the chapter.

There is something peculiarly interesting to the childless observer in this matter of plans and hopes which parents entertain for their offspring. During a long and useless life I have been the recipient of many confidences as to the well-defined talents and pronounced tastes of various Dickies and Dorotheas, and have never

I trust been found wanting in a spirit of acquiescence in the paternal certainty that these early indications pointed to a brilliant career in the line thus suggested. True, I have of late years entertained myself at times by recalling some of these promises of early youth and comparing them with the actual occupations of their possessors. The result has shaken me a little in the matter of ready sympathy with the parent of today, who assures me that his boy's tastes are all scientific because he meddles with the battery in the cellar; but I have not observed as yet any diminution of enthusiasm on the part of mothers and fathers by reason of my dampened ardor. I remember two boys, given to pillage and devastation, whose happiness seemed to hinge upon the possession of matches, and who at various times placed their respective families in imminent danger of destruction by fire—a tendency that pointed plainly to a brilliant military career of arson, plunder and death. One of them is an

insurance agent and the other a Presbyterian preacher, opposed to the revision of the creed.

Some
Immortal
Fallacies

I also knew several little girls whose talent for music was so absorbing that their parents doubted the advisability of teaching them the multiplication table, lest it should delay the time when they would dazzle a waiting public by their artistic skill. I met one of them the other day, and, being an old-fashioned person, asked her if she still "played." She looked at me blankly for a moment and said, "No, I work. The mother of four children does not play." Another said she was glad she studied music because it made her hands flexible for the typewriter; and a third is teaching plane trigonometry in a high school. I have known a great many boys whose interest in machinery was so much greater than their interest in books that they would forget to go to school if there was a fire-engine within three blocks of the school-house—the same boys that manifested their

fine instinct for mechanics earlier in life by disemboweling all their mechanical toys to see how they were made, and then howled dismally because they would not go.

So far as I have been able to follow the lives of these gifted youths, I have found them walking in paths professional or in the byways of dry-goods and general merchandise. Only two of them, so far as I know, have devoted their time to machinery; one of these writes poetry for the daily papers and the other was a successful candidate for a city office at the last election. Truly "a boy's will is the wind's will, and the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." I wonder how many of us, looking back to the tastes of childhood, can trace in them any indication of the preferences of maturity. Personally, nothing stands out in my own recollection more vividly than my eagerness for stories of the sea. I hung over them with dotting fondness, which varied in direct proportion to the thrillingness of

the shipwreck. This particular form of disaster and hair-breadth escape seemed to curdle my blood to exactly the proper consistency for acute happiness. I have never been able to tell why I preferred it to fire, earthquake or Indians, nor have I ever understood why I cared about such tales at all. No doubt my parents spent anxious hours in the fear that I might run away to sea, but as time went on and I displayed a comfortable preference for my own hearthstone, their anxiety was somewhat allayed. I have wondered at times however what might have been the difference in the result of the late war with Spain if this pronounced taste on my part had constrained them to educate me for the navy.

And this leads me to the time-worn theory that a woman cannot throw straight. Nothing prevents me from attacking this ancient prejudice but the certainty that all my efforts would fall wide of the mark. I had also intended to make a point con-

cerning woman's ability to sharpen a pencil, but I desist.

There is no fallacy more insidious than the idea that we can make people like us by doing good. There is something very pathetic in the strenuous efforts of worthy souls to get themselves loved by reason of virtuous and commendable acts. Now yeast is very active, but I never knew anyone to be really fond of yeast. Of course we all respect it and acknowledge its usefulness, but very few of us could live up to a diet of yeast. Amiel says (and for wisdom how often we go to the man who seemed to do nothing!): "In choosing one's friends we must choose those whose qualities are inborn and whose virtues are virtues of temperament." Very discouraging to those of us who have been striving to piece out nature by grace. But some crumb of comfort may be found in the possibility that if we continue to do good and eschew evil all the days of our life, acquired virtue may come to sit so lightly and easily upon us that an oc-

casional fellow-sinner may think it our very own and love us in spite of the real curmudgeon beneath. At any rate the experiment is worth trying. And yet I fear that the melancholy truth will remain, that the individual who only wishes good to the whole world in a hearty, whole-souled way, without lifting a finger to bring it about, will always have more friends than the one who determinedly and systematically sets himself to get up a millennium according to his own plans and specifications.

This brings us quite logically to an unfounded opinion current among men since the beginning of time, namely that women, even good women, like wicked men. This idea seems to have originated with Adam, when he found that his wife, believing Satan to be a man of the world, thought it possible that he might be able to make a few suggestions to her and her horticultural husband. Now I have observed that a good many men like wicked men; at least they

stand by them and protect them, and carefully hide their wrongdoing from women, in a way that argues the greatest friendliness and affection. All the men that I know are good, so of course I can't speak very positively on this subject; but I am quite certain that if other women seem to like bad men it is because they think they are good; and so long as they depend upon men, as they must, for their information I am disposed to think they will find considerable difficulty in separating the wheat from the chaff.

Very few good people, men or women, really like evil, but it is true that many of the qualities that make us likable, developed to excess make us immoral. It is doubtless these qualities that attract: the social grace, the ready speech, the considerateness, the cordiality that make a young man too popular for his own good and a ready prey to flattery. People do not like him because of his faults, but some of his faults may result from too many people liking him. Given all these

good qualities, however, and the strength to resist the dangers they entail, you have the man most women find socially agreeable. I do not think he differs greatly from the man men find socially agreeable. And right here I should like to ask why we are so constantly assured that women like "strong" men, "men they can lean upon," men of force and character, and why, in the face of this, the ideal "ladies' man" is represented as a mental weakling.

Another fallacious position, which it especially becomes most of us to undermine, is the popular idea that young people are seeing their happiest days. I remember once being greatly surprised to hear a venerable man say that he felt sorry for young people; they seemed to him so crude and flavorless, like very green apples. I am unable to say just how the idea of youthful happiness has gained such ground, for, really, youth is full of turmoil and mental uncertainty and bitter disappointment and yearning and

helplessness. Physical vigor is unquestionably a good thing, but no one really wants his youth again. If it should come to him unexpectedly he would call it softening of the brain and be frightened beyond words. Middle life is in reality the serene and comfortable time, when one has reached the top and sits fanning himself, mentally looking over the landscape of life before starting down hill. It is the climax, the moment we have been striving for, the arrival. The real question is, when is it? Even old age is better than youth. It is a great deal easier to go down hill than up. I am particularly anxious to have this theory firmly established in the minds of the young and I trust that its inculcation will be made compulsory in the public schools. I have noticed that, up to a certain age, children are very eager to be grown, and I think if this respect for maturity could be deepened into envy, and if the ordinary high-school commencement address could assume a tone of pity, tem-

pered with hope that the pupils might live through their present lamentable condition and emerge into the happiness and dignity of middle-life, a much-needed reform might be brought about in the attitude of youth toward old age. Indeed I am not at all certain that we are ourselves not to blame for the much-complained-of insolence of youth, with our perpetual disrespect to our own estate and endless laudation of theirs. If we all want to be young, or say we do, naturally the young take it that we are in a bad way, and those who call for too much sympathy are likely to get with it a good deal of contempt.

Another serious misconception, and one that strikes deeper than may at first appear, is the belief that men do not care for beautiful clothes. This has always seemed to me a reflection on the artistic taste of half the race, which is as unkind as it is uncalled for. Men would undoubtedly like to dress in rich fabrics and bright colors, notably red, if their occupations

would permit. Indeed, in their days of leisure they reveled in satins and velvets of varied hues, and nothing but the unrelenting demands of daily toil induced them to forego the delicate ruffles at the wrist and neck, the jeweled buckles and powdered hair of the court. Even within my memory men whose profession allowed them the dignity of a study at home—ministers, professors and the like—attired themselves in dressing-gowns of gorgeous tints and graceful outline; but even these, alas, are numbered with the past. The flowered waistcoat is also gone. Nothing is left of their former glory but the cravat. There is something to me quite pathetic about a man's necktie: the effort to crowd his whole artistic nature into a bit of silk two inches wide, selected in two minutes from two thousand others, is certainly touching. There is a mute appeal about it, as if it would say, "I am all he has left, the one useless article of his attire; but he clings to me to prove that he would

like to look pretty if he were not too busy." It is like the pot of stunted geranium in the window of the poor (sometimes it is very much like it) expressing the "heart hunger for art and beauty stifled by sordid care." I know of course that this cannot be helped, that men are crowded and jostled and hurried because of the demands of their families. I have always noticed that if a man's family is taken away from him he goes out of business, especially if he is making money fast and getting ahead of his competitors. But in spite of these facts I shall continue to shed tears over the necktie and all that it symbolizes.

A most elusive and therefore most dangerous fallacy is one peculiarly dear to the feminine heart, namely the belief which every woman cherishes that she has the true spirit of social reform because she stands ready to do all sorts of sensible things—as soon as all the other women of her acquaintance are ready to support her in so doing. In other words, she is ready,

indeed eager, to be unfashionable as soon as it shall become fashionable to be unfashionable. She wishes women would dress sensibly and entertain simply and rid their lives of various soul-destroying complexities, and she makes no secret of her wish. Indeed, she tells you of it most charmingly, while she holds her purse in one hand and catches up her superfluous drapey with the other. She thinks the custom of leaving a pack of visiting-cards at one residence is unnecessary and foolish, but she continues to leave them just the same, for fear that some one may fancy that she does not know all the useless conventionalities of society. Perhaps it might be well for her to have a card engraved, "I am perfectly acquainted with the card system and disapprove of the same. Mrs. Platt R. E. Form."

There is a fallacy for which we all feel such tenderness that I find it hard to lay rude hands upon it. It has been the theme of romance since romance was born, and the older we grow the

dearer it becomes. Is it necessary to say that I refer to the one-and-only-love theory? But the fear that our novelists may desert it through my influence, and start upon a series of emotional complexities involving in the reader a knowledge of differential calculus, prompts me to withdraw from any attack which I might otherwise have meditated.

There is no greater fallacy current than that supply is governed by demand. Witness the enormous demand for the kind of bread your mother used to make, in contrast with the very small supply; witness the demand for good husbands, for obedient wives; and have you ever noticed in your own case that the demand for ready money in any way influenced the supply? If there were any relation, from my own experience I should say they vary inversely.

Then there is that battered but still recognizable assertion that the senseless extravagances of the rich benefit the poor: the belief that the

laboring-man who makes sky-rockets at one dollar a day is as much benefited as if he were making model tenements at the same wages, although the fireworks send gunpowder up and the new dwellings bring rents down. This much-dandled theory occupies about the same position in economics that a rubber doll occupies in the nursery: battered but still smiling, it serves to amuse the latest comer.

Space is not sufficient for more than a mere reference to the well-known newspaper ideal of the mother-in-law. I have noticed that even editors are not slow to send for "my wife's mother" when illness or trouble of any kind assails the household. And I have also made careful note of the fact that when any unhappiness has been caused in a family of my acquaintance by the much-maligned mother-in-law, it has invariably been by the husband's mother; and yet one never hears women speak with anything but consideration and respect of mothers-in-law. As a matter of fact

the modern mother-in-law, on both sides of the house, is in general a most philosophical and useful personage, and her abolition would cause a great gap in many more important places than the funny column of the newspaper.

Some
Immortal
Fallacies

Another fiction dear to the reportorial heart and pencil is the woman who screams and faints upon the occurrence of any accident. I have been in several rather thrilling public catastrophes and have never yet heard a woman scream or seen one faint from nervous excitement. True, I did once see a man, when a fallen building had buried three men beneath the debris, wildly pulling laths from two uprights on the remote edge of the pile and throwing them aimlessly about; but he was not reported. And I did read, in the report of the recent accident on the Coast Line, of a man, who was unhurt, running through the car yelling, treading upon women who were pinned in the aisle, and being prevented from stepping upon an injured

woman with a baby in her arms by being knocked down by another passenger. These things do not of course prove that women do not lose their heads in emergencies, but they do encourage us to believe that the public mind is prone to cling to certain preconceptions that may belong to the remote past.

Perhaps there is a grain of truth in all of these notions, since we who have so often crushed them to earth see them so blithely rise again. And perhaps, since the principles that govern our lives are, after all, so few and so easily acquired, the moral force of the race is to be expended hereafter in determining with nicety and exactness how to apply them to the complexities of modern life. For however we may agree as to the truth or fallacy of all these things, we are all, I think, ready to affirm the unassailability of Mr. Tulliver's statement that this is "an uncommon puzzlin' world."

A NEW POINT OF VIEW

As we approach the end of a year it is seemly for those of us who are mentally supple to put ourselves through such exercises as shall enable us to keep up with or at least not lag too far behind the twentieth-century procession. In so doing, those of us who are young enough to dare it must of necessity look backward, and all of us who still "retain our faculties" must endeavor to look forward, that we may be prepared for the worst—it being self-evident that we are all prepared for the best, both in this life and that which is to come.

In taking this survey it is unquestionably the duty of everyone who discerns a cloud, even no larger than a woman's hand, upon the horizon of our social future, to provide himself with the largest and most musical fog-horn procurable and sound a note of

warning. In pursuance of this solemn duty I wish to draw your attention to facts and figures that point unmistakably to a no less serious culmination than the extinction of the human race.

It is hard for us, sitting here in the midst of man's ingenious handiwork, surrounded by the evidence of his skill and intelligence, to imagine just how the world would feel if the human race should become extinct; but even the most unimaginative among us can readily understand that it would be lonesome. The animals would drop a tear to the memory of the Humane Society, and millions upon millions of dollars' worth of machinery would rust in idleness since the veriest brute would find it impossible to make use of many of the things that man has devised.

Far be it from me to add an unnecessary care at this festive season to minds already burdened with the Philippines. Nothing but a strong sense of duty and an abiding sympathy with the weaker sex morally,

prompts me to bring this matter before you, with the following brief introduction.

A New
Point of
View

Countless ages ago, long before any of us were born, there is every reason to believe that men lived in idleness. In such climates as permitted this they multiplied, and as they ventured, or were crowded, into conditions that required work to keep alive, they died. Thus only the idle survived. This is called survival of the fittest.

In this primitive state men had nothing whatever to do but make themselves agreeable, which is their natural bent. By a wise provision of nature they were handsomer than women. They never shaved their heads, and their hair hung in tendrils above their manly brows and curled about their shell-like ears and fell in ringlets upon their symmetrical shoulders. They were natural musicians, and oh how divinely they sang! They were graceful, elegant—in short

they were "just perfectly lovely." Analogues of this happy state are to be seen among the birds and other animals that never work, except when enslaved by man, and where the male is much more brilliant and musical than his mate.

Women in those days were rather plain, uninteresting creatures, but men loved them,—probably because men must love somebody and won't love each other. And these idle, supercilious women used to sit about under the trees and listen to the musical contests of their suitors, make remarks about their personal appearance, smile at their innocent schemes for attracting attention, and behave very much as—well—as was natural under the circumstances.

Of course this idyllic condition of things could not continue. And, as usual, ambition proved the downfall of man. Gradually those beautiful and godlike creatures began to vie with each other for feminine favor in new and devious ways. Their siren voices

whispered in the primitive feminine ear, "Idol of my soul, don't trouble yourself to climb the bread-fruit tree for your luncheon; let me bring it to you." Then after a little while, "Star of my destiny, why not let me build a shelter over you, lest the bread-fruit fall upon you and mar your"—(and here mendacity came to the aid of ambition, and flattery was born)—"your faultless and angelic features." Still later, recognizing the need of his unattractive companion for adornment, he brought gifts of flowers and bright feathers and bits of colored stone and shining metal, which enabled her to trick herself out quite stylishly.

And thus, gradually, men, alas, began to work and evil days came upon the race.

Now, moderation is not a masculine quality. They tore through the forests in pursuit of game; they waded into rivers for fish; they dragged about trees to build houses; they came home all sloppy and tired; and the harder they worked the less

beautiful they became; they shaved off their hyacinthine locks, and some of them wore overalls. And they began to fuss about fastening their clothing with orange-thorns, till one of them invented buttons and life became quite sordid and prosaic for the poor fellows.

Of course the women enjoyed it. They sat about and giggled over the mad race for precedence, and ordered their slaves about, demanded more flowers and stuffed poultry for their hats, more rooms in their houses, larger and more brilliant stones to wear, daintier things to eat, and behaved altogether quite shamefully.

But finally their day of reckoning came. Men became interested in the competition itself, and forgot all about its object.

They began to think quite highly of themselves and the more successful among them even went the length of considering themselves "catches," presuming to pick and choose, and to discuss the advisability or non-advisabil-

ity of encumbering themselves with extravagant and exacting wives. In other words, they began to get even with the women for their former supercilious and contemptuous treatment.

Then the women awoke to the fact that they were helpless. They did not know how to do anything but manage men, and heretofore that had been a comparatively easy task; as it grew harder they of necessity gave more time to it, but they never regained their former supremacy. Privately they all knew that the luckless primitive ancestress who was too lazy to gather her own bread-fruit was at the bottom of all the trouble. She had given away her sex and there was nothing left for them but to make the best of it. So they set about finding out what would please men, and men very affably aided them by setting forth their preferences.

It was into this epoch that most of us, I think, were born. And there is every indication that if the world

is to continue we shall have to be born again.

Men have contracted a bad habit of industry; they have piled up more wealth than they have time to spend, and in consequence they have founded colleges for women, many of whom had grown somewhat weary of sitting around watching men work and were quite willing to go to school.

These institutions very injudiciously taught women all the arts and sciences and all the discoveries men had made, and all their ways of making money, with the sole intention of course of impressing upon them the ability of those who had done all this to take care of women for all time to come, and of demonstrating to them the lack of any necessity on their part for inventing or doing anything or knowing anything at all about anything, except how to make themselves agreeable to men in general and to one man in particular—if he should happen to come along.

The professors in these institu-

tions always took pains to impress upon the women who attended them that there was no harm in knowing things, provided they kept quiet about it and pretended not to know anything, and that they must never under any circumstances, unless forced by starvation, make any practical use of anything they learned, or employ it in earning money.

Well, women went on in this way for quite a while, but again the vaulting ambition of man over-leapt itself, and this effort to show what he had done and could do brought him to grief. Women came to know so much by and by that they undertook to do things, and before men really awoke to the dangers of their situation, women had sallied forth and gone to work.

Then the awful horror of their condition dawned upon the dominant sex. The woman who could take care of herself would have to be conciliated. And men were hoist with their own petard.

I have endeavored thus briefly to outline a situation that presents strange questions for our consideration and calls for a vital readjustment of at least half our views. Large numbers of men have not fully awakened to the real condition of affairs, and no doubt those who are comfortably settled in life under the old regime may never quite realize its vexations; but most of us have more or less to do with the training of the young and the matter should therefore claim our serious attention.

It is not likely that in our day matters will reach such a crisis that men will depend entirely upon women for support and thus be obliged to marry for homes; consequently it is not likely that many of us will have to see the total disappearance of any desire on the part of women to make themselves agreeable to men. But indications are not lacking that the free-and-easy masculine attitude toward matrimony will soon become a thing of the past.

Of course there will always be a large number of useful and ornamental men and women who do not want to be married. Concerning these I have nothing to say. It may not seem to all of us the happiest frame of mind never to want to be married, but it is certainly more comfortable than wanting to be unmarried, and it is discreet not to stir up these good people on the subject, lest they become epigrammatical and say disagreeable personal things as to the relative number of wrinkles and gray hairs of those inside and outside the matrimonial pale. Even these worthy citizens, whom we are all rather anxious to conciliate and keep in good humor, would lament with us the total disappearance of an institution which they are always glad to have other people maintain.

Primarily, as I have attempted to show, men rather enjoyed making themselves agreeable, and this fact gives us reason to hope that with a little judicious assistance they may reacquire some of their former skill in

this regard. The problem lies in the awful chasm between the primitive and the modern woman. Still, there is reason to believe that if woman, with her once limited intelligence, learned by stress of circumstances to know exactly what she ought to do to please man, he, by close attention and unlimited advice, can learn how to please her.

Personally, I am inclined to think the matter not entirely hopeless, and when one reflects on the able assistance always extended by man to woman in her efforts to learn what is satisfactory to him, it seems a question of simple justice and reciprocity for us to extend a helping hand to him in this hour of need.

During the epoch that is just closing there have been by careful estimate three hundred and fifty-nine thousand, eight hundred and seventy-three books written concerning the nature, tastes, duties and obligations of woman. In this way we have come to know more about ourselves than we

could have found out by simply being women. Of course most of these books were written by men, and they have not always agreed on all points, but as to the basic principle there has been a singular and beautiful unanimity, namely, that if women are good they will certainly get married. If at any time there has been a hairbreadth diversion from this leading idea, it has varied no farther than to admit that while some women may be very good and yet not be married, it is an indisputable truth that if a woman is not good she will certainly not get married.

Concerning the nature of women, these three hundred and fifty-nine thousand, eight hundred and seventy-three volumes have shown more variation, but on one point they have never failed to agree, namely, that woman is naturally the most unnatural person in the world, and if left to herself and not perpetually counseled by men, who are naturally natural, she will surely do things or want to do things

totally at variance with all her natural instincts and inclinations.

Of course this has made life rather puzzling for women at times, and yet it has had its advantages. If a woman ever wanted to do anything that she had not been in the habit of doing, she could immediately consult a book and see whether it was womanly; and if it ever occurred to her that since she wanted to do it, and it was innocent in itself, her doing it might possibly go to prove that it was womanly, she could read two or three books and find out that womanly women were women whom men liked, and that anything men liked was womanly. This of course cleared up all her difficulties and made it very simple for her to decide what to do.

In addition to all these books, there have been approximately eighty-nine million, nine hundred and forty-three thousand, two hundred and seventy-nine columns of newspaper stuff called "Woman and Home," which men have prepared telling wo-

men how to be womanly, and how to dress, cook, sew, think and walk, in the way men like, and always promising marriage if the directions are carefully followed. (It is proper in this connection to state that the above figures do not include Mr. Bok. Up to the time of Mr. Bok's appearance statistics were carefully kept, but since his advent the statisticians have entirely lost count. There is reason to believe, however, that the output of advice to women has more than doubled.)

When one calls to mind the fact that no books have yet been written on "Man and Paternity" or "The True Sphere of Man," and that no newspaper in existence contains a column devoted to "Man in the Home" or "Of Interest to Men"; that women have not published any "Heart-to-Heart Talks with Bachelors" and that very little has been said in print as to "The Kind of Men Women Like," it is not to be wondered at that men grope about rather blindly when

they endeavor to make themselves charming.

But books and papers are not the only aids that have been extended to women in these important matters. Men have delivered many lectures and sermons concerning "The Ideal Woman," in which they have carefully noted all their preferences and tastes so that any woman who was in danger of being simply a human creature, following her instincts and allowing results to justify her, has been saved from such disaster and enabled to lop off any inclinations that would interfere with matrimony.

It is easy to see, therefore, why women are today such spontaneous and natural creatures; and there is reason to hope that by reducing the plan of life for men to a few simple axioms they may be relieved from many perplexities.

Of course under the new dispensation all this printed matter will not necessarily be wasted. A great deal of it may be used again by changing the

pronouns. For instance, some newspaper might, with slight changes, print an article on "How a Man May Keep the Affection of His Wife," something after this fashion:

A New
Point of
View

A man should always meet his wife with a pleasant smile on his return from his day's work. Remember that she has many cares and do not worry her with any of yours. Don't tell her you have a headache: no woman likes a complaining husband; nothing is more likely to drive a woman to her club than perpetual complaints.

Or something like this on the subject of dress:

Women care very little about the expense of a man's clothing; all they ask is that he be simply and neatly dressed. The husband who comes to dinner in a fresh seersucker suit or a pair of clean blue overalls, with his wife's favorite flower in his button-hole, will be more beautiful in her eyes than if he were clad in the most faultless broad-cloth and polished . . .

Or on the inexhaustible subject of marriage:

Young women often accept many attentions from and appear to enjoy the society of young men they would not think of marrying. Young men should remember

this. A girl may be much amused by the wit and gayety of a dashing cavalier, but it by no means follows that she would select him as a husband. When it comes to marrying, women want something more than gallantry. It would be well for some of our reckless young society beaux to stop and inquire whether they are the kind of men from whom an industrious, home-loving woman would choose the father of her children.

Of course there will have to be a series of articles written by women for the leading magazines on "What Has the Higher Education Done for Men?" The subject might be divided as follows:

"Do our universities turn out good fathers?"

"What is the relative health of college-men and mechanics?"

"Do the male graduates of our universities have large families?"

If these questions cannot be answered satisfactorily, it would be well to close to men most of our institutions of learning, since they can be of no practical use.

It is easy to see from these few in-

stances that women will be kept very busy for some time to come remodeling our literature to meet the exigencies of the times, and in the meantime young men will have to be counseled a great deal by their elders before they will take in the situation and acquire the new point of view. A judicious father will talk to his son in this way:

“My boy, I hope you will give up that bad habit of smoking. You may think nothing of it at present, but, let me tell you, women don’t like tobacco. They may not say very much about it, but no woman wants to kiss a man whose lips and teeth are yellow and whose moustache is discolored and smoky. I’m very much afraid, my boy, if you go on, that no nice girl will marry you. Think of that!”

Of course it will be a trifle hard at first for young men, when they decide on their career and confide their glowing aspirations and ambitions to some sage and experienced elder, to have him shake his head and say:

"Don't do it, my boy, don't do it. You'll find it will not please women."

"Please women! Well, women be—displeased then. That's what I want to do, and it's what I can do, and it's what I'm going to do. Women are all very well in their way, but I'm not going to fashion my affairs to suit them. They can take me or leave me!"

"My dear fellow, they'll do both. You'd better listen to me. If you do as you say, you're very likely never to find a wife. Women don't like these enterprises; they want you to be just the kind of man their fathers were: good and quiet and conservative. Did you ever notice how women love their fathers? Well, you must try to be exactly like them—it's the only way to please women."

It will perhaps be many years before men will learn how to address an assemblage of women under the new regime. Habits are stubborn things and just how a man can talk to women without telling them he is heartily in

favor of everything they are trying to do to improve themselves, because it will aid them in the training of their sons, I for one am at a loss to imagine. It is just possible that great persistence on the part of women in encouraging men to develop themselves mentally, morally and physically, not from any inherent desire for perfection but that they may thereby fit themselves to bring up their daughters to be good and great women, may serve to divert the mind of the average masculine orator from his pet theme. This, however, will be long after we are all dead.

In the meantime women should lose no time in formulating their conception of a manly man, that men may set about conforming to their standards. To do this thoroughly they must begin in the nursery, and reverse the first two maxims of child-training, so that in the future we may hear: "Oh come come! Little boys shouldn't," and "Oh, never mind. Girls will be girls!"

If men ever become restive under the exactions of women they must find comfort in the fact that they are living up to the ideals of what they have always insisted is the better half of the race, and if this does not console them for not being allowed to decide on questions of their own nature and instincts they may add to it the reflection that they must be good or they will not get married. This latter reflection, we can assure them, will sustain them through a good many ages of subjection. It will make them modest, unassuming, industrious and affectionate, and after a few generations they will begin to meet and talk about their own virtues, and tell each other how much better than women they are, and shed tears over each other because they love their children, and talk in public of what a powerful emotion paternal love is, and boast about their "influence," and wind up by concluding that they hold the destinies of the world in their fists.

When they have reached this high

degree of moral perfection, coupled
with meekness, we shall fully under-
stand the poet's assurance that "noth-
ing doth so become a man as modest
sweetness and humility."

A New
Point of
View

THE MODERN HEROINE

Those of us who have reached that modest summit called middle life and sit fanning ourselves and surveying the landscape before starting down hill, may I think find wholesome discipline in being called upon now and then to speak a word to those behind us in years though often in naught else. Indeed I am not certain but that the benefit is largely to the speaker rather than to the hearer. There are useful lessons to be derived from the process of overhauling that accumulation of odds and ends which we refer to rather proudly at times as our experience, and these lessons become emphatic, even poignant, if we have in view selecting therefrom something that would prove valuable to us were we allowed another start. Too often they bring us face to face with the probability that the often longed-for

privilege of "beginning again" would result in an entirely new and original set of blunders.

The Modern
Heroine

I have been driven to these rather somber reflections by thinking over all the subjects upon which I have at various times written and spoken with a view to improving the minds but principally the morals of my contemporaries. Most of them were intended to bring about much-needed social reform. Let me allay your fears by stating that none of them has been entirely successful. The world is still quite a comfortable, even pleasant place of residence in spite of my efforts, and it is with a very distinct sense of relief that I find myself surrounded by those who are forming their world, instead of reforming it.

Properly, old age ought to be a subject of interest to us all, since we are all working toward it, but curiously enough it is not. I leave you to account for my certainty that the young woman, and preëminently the American young woman, interests all

of us. I have therefore chosen to speak of her as portrayed by, but more especially as suggestive of, our modern fiction. You will pardon me if I wander at will from realism to reality, from the portrait to the model, from the heroine to the young woman herself.

The morality of our own fiction, which has often been ascribed to the omnipresence of our young women, is certainly not to our discredit, however much the advocate of erotic fervor may strive to convince us that it is; and if her censorship continues to keep it free from the cheap effects of intrigue and passion, not only art but society will be still more in her debt.

I have said that the young woman interests all of us. Individually, I do not know that she is more interesting than her brother. I have not found her so, although young men have repeatedly assured me that she is. But collectively, by reason of the transition state of society, she is something

more of a problem than heretofore. And the spirit which leads us to write of her with a capital Y and a capital W must of necessity react upon her individually. Or have I reversed matters, and is it the fact that she is beginning to write herself in larger type that has forced the problem upon us?

It would be strange if, with all the prominence that has been given her of late in talk and in print, she were not a trifle self-conscious, a little over-sure of herself. In the face of the charity and even love with which we have always regarded these youthful traits in her brother, we can hardly condemn them in her. And since we make no secret of the fact that she interests us we must not be surprised that she finds herself interesting. That she bears our inquisitive and somewhat impertinent scrutiny with singular dignity and good nature we must all acknowledge; and if there is in this at times a suggestion that she is sublimely indifferent to it, we may encourage ourselves with the thought

that she must be developing naturally, since nature is always profoundly unconcerned as to our opinions. Perhaps after all she does not really know how much we are thinking of her, and the seeming indifference may be a blissful unconsciousness. If this is so, then I trust this paper may not awaken her to any nervous anxiety or disturb by so much as a ripple her charming tranquillity.

In speaking of the heroine I have no desire, even if it were possible, to ignore the modern hero. I have generally found him lurking in the immediate vicinity, and there is little probability that this occasion will prove an exception. If he is not quite so often on our pens and tongues, it is not that he is less often in our thoughts, but rather that we have learned what to expect of him and have decided to let him work out his own problem in his own way. Just how long it will be before we treat our young woman in the same way no one can perhaps say; but her increasing

fitness and willingness to control her own destiny makes it probable that the time is not far distant.

So much has been said and written concerning feminine complexity that women themselves have almost come to think their mental plan more intricate than that of man. The actions of men are unquestionably simpler and more unconstrained than those of women, but the difference is, I think, easily accounted for by the firm ground upon which every young man finds himself at the outset of life. Just what he will do or how he will succeed in it may be and generally is problematical, but all his doubts are founded upon one unvarying and undisputable fact—that his life will be what he makes it. His successes and his failures alike will be his own; the former a source of justifiable pride, the latter to be borne without whimpering, since he alone is responsible.

Now, let any young man, by a violent effort of the imagination, substitute for this wholesome certainty a

nebulous uncertainty concerning his future, an uncertainty in all things save one: that it will in no way depend upon his merit; that his success or failure may hinge upon something as trivial as the curve of his eyebrows or the way in which his hair ripples above them. I say let him imagine this, if he can, and ask himself what inconsistencies of behavior would result.

As for myself, the longer I live the more my wonder grows that our girls are as self-poised, as reasonable, as straightforward as they are, in view of the haze of irresponsibility and uncertainty with which we surround them. I know households in which young girls are allowed to drift through daily life with less definite purpose than a poodle. They help a little, they make their own simple gowns, they practice something called music, and presently, after groping about in inanity for a few years, they concentrate their energies on invalidism as an occupation, in which neither ability,

education, capital nor industry are required, and which must therefore be distinctively feminine.

Suppose we should try this plan with a son: teach him to be nice and tidy and make his summer coats and darn his stockings; let him take banjo lessons; tell him his highest duty is to be a good husband and father and carefully conceal from him all the facts and duties of paternity for fear of "brushing the bloom from his youth"; teach him directly or indirectly that the one success of his life lies in matrimony, and that matrimony depends primarily upon good looks; compare his eyebrows with the eyebrows of the other boys in his set, and every time a boy comes about the house discuss his personal appearance carefully and in detail with your son; have his friends divided into "real pretty boys" and boys who are "not pretty but have good figures," and a few boys who (poor creatures) are not at all pretty but kind-hearted and pleasant. I cannot give you all the

instructions, never having had any daughters, but most of you can fill out the other details from memory.

At the risk of extreme cruelty in the interests of science, I should like to subject one young man to that which awaits numbers of young women; I should like to send him home from college with something like this:

"Now that you have completed your education, I trust you will settle down contentedly and help your father. Of course I do not expect you to thoroughly learn his business; there will be ample time for that when you have a store or an office of your own. But I hope you will cheerfully assist him, without salary beyond your board and clothes, and in the meantime pick up such information as you can concerning his duties.

"Do not, however, upon any consideration betray any desire to undertake his work, no matter how competent you may become. This would be extremely improper. In other words, prepare yourself surreptitiously for a

certain line of life, and carefully refrain from applying for it."

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Is it not possible that under this bewildering system our young man might become just a trifle "complex"?

That the young woman of today, both in life and in literature, is often rather puzzlingly complex I freely admit. That she is sometimes unduly introspective, full of vague questionings and unsatisfactory replies, a creature of eager desire for knowledge and of few opportunities to apply it, of consequent restlessness and feverish and unsatisfying activity—all of us who know and love her can testify. But that she will outgrow this, not by throwing it aside but by adapting it to her use and in so doing gain strength without losing her charm, I at least am fully persuaded.

Certainly, with all her faults, she is a much better companion both in and out of fiction since she ceased to swoon and learned to swim; and even the man who thinks he likes the old-fashioned girl would, I suspect, find

himself rather helpless if fainting should, so to speak, be revived and become chronic with the modern athletic heroine.

Glancing over recent English and American novels, and calling to mind the elegantly restrained emotions of Evelina and Cecilia, one cannot but wonder whether women or only novelists have changed their ways so prodigiously in a brief one hundred years.

For the enlightenment of those who are unfamiliar with such scenes, I will state that the following is a description of a proposal of marriage from the pen of Miss Burney, as written by the heroine in a letter to her father:

"My lord," cried I, endeavoring to disengage my hand, "pray let me go."

"I will," cried he, to my inexpressible confusion dropping upon one knee, "if you wish me to leave you."

"Oh, my lord," exclaimed I, "rise, I beseech you, rise. Such a posture to me—surely your lordship is not so cruel as to mock me."

"Mock you," repeated he earnestly; "no, I revere you! I esteem and I admire you

above all human beings, you are the friend to whom my soul is attached as to its better half, you are the most amiable, the most perfect of women, and you are dearer to me than language has the power of telling."

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I attempt not to describe my sensations at that moment; I scarce breathed; I doubted if I existed; the blood forsook my cheeks, and my feet refused to sustain me. Lord Orville, hastily rising, supported me to a chair, upon which I sank almost lifeless.

I have not, for some years at least, been present upon such an occasion, but something in the walk and conversation of the twentieth-century young woman leads me to think that regular gymnastic exercise, with a moderate allowance of basket-ball, tennis and golf would save her from a total collapse even under these trying circumstances.

Every woman knows that the great struggle of life is to stand bravely up before emotion, not to be swept away by it. Why should we not teach our girls to build their lives firm and strong, as we try to teach our boys, knowing all the whirlwinds of feeling that must try their strength,

and leaving marriage out of the question? They will marry, no doubt, but when they do, let it be because something stronger than the structure they have built sweeps it away, and not because of the first gust of feeling that blows through their vacant lives. Women suffer enough already from strained emotion; they are not content to be happy as men are; they want to be tragically happy; they want, alas, "to be understood"—as if any human being ever enjoyed that luxury.

Passing in review that notable list of women created by George Eliot, we see in Dorothea Brooke and Gwendolen Grandcourt—two of the most pathetic figures in literature—a faint foreshadowing of the young woman of today. Poor Dorothea, with her capacity for devotion, her singleness of purpose, her scorn of pettiness, groping in the damp mist of uselessness that surrounded the English gentlewoman! And walking beside her,

in that strange blindness to his own needs and to her efficiency, Lydgate, who sees in Rosamund Vincy's beauty everything that is gracious and womanly—everything that Dorothea is and Rosamund is not! Perhaps times have not and will never change greatly in this; and if a certain type of self-sufficient masculinity continues to remain afraid of the young woman of too many ideas (I believe he generally calls them "notions") it is only fair that he should bear without sympathy the hopeless vacuity that must be fairly maddening when twenty-five or thirty years have robbed it of curves and dimples and distracting pink-and-whiteness.

In spite of the oft-repeated charge that women are unfair to each other in life, we have little reason to complain of such injustice in literature. Sometimes, as in Mrs. Ward's *Elinor*, we suspect an unfairness that amounts to partiality for her own sex, and her portrait of Lucy ought to go a long way in refuting any charge of

lack of appreciation of the American girl on the part of the cultivated Englishwoman. Lucy may be a New England type; let us hope she is; but whether she is or not it is comforting to know that Mrs. Ward thinks she is.

If one feels doubtful of Lucy's reality, the picture that Miss Wilkins has given in "The Portion of Labor" of Ellen Brewster, sprung from even lower conditions, is certainly reassuring. I wish I were able to say confidently that innate refinement would in the average girl thus survive the constant presence of vulgarity. But I cannot. Lucy and Ellen may be true to life, but they are not average girls. More than that, I fear they are somewhat infrequent even in that undefined region above the average.

It is not the portrayal of women, either young or old, that has given Mr. Howells his fame as an American novelist. But, looking over the girls to whom he has introduced us, we must allow that they are quite as interesting as those to whom we could

introduce him if he were to come among us. Imogen Graham in "Indian Summer" is certainly deliciously young, and her avowed "love for weird things" has a strangely familiar sound. Alice in "April Hopes," with her overwrought conscience, though not a familiar type among us, is no doubt a legitimate survival of puritanism. Lydia Blood is certainly rather colorless for a heroine, but this detracts in no way from the interest of what happens to her. And then he has given us the two young women in "The Landlord at Lion's Head"—I have forgotten their names—both of whom are quite delightfully subtle in their different ways. And Kitty in "A Chance Acquaintance," thoroughly wholesome and likable; and the Lapham girls, whom we all recognize whether we like them or not. Indeed, the list, although somewhat commonplace, is just such as any young man might make, if early fame should call upon him to enumerate the young women who have influenced him.

I do not discover that the popular belief that young women are becoming too independent to be lovable is borne out by the popular novel. Love and marriage seem to hold their own as the dominating theme of fiction, and while both hero and heroine analyze their affection in the most searching fashion, and seem disposed (no doubt as a result of higher education) to test it scientifically as well as emotionally, the conclusion seems usually to be that it is practically indestructible.

Indeed there is something almost pathetic in the determination with which we all cling to the belief that the truly noble love but once. The fact that we have all been in love many times seems not in the least to affect the fervor of this belief. The young woman whose pathway is strewn with the fragments of broken engagements speaks with scorn of the heroine who does not remain true to her first love through endless complications; and the solid citizen laughs

with his matronly wife over the hopeless grief that submerged his youth when the village doctor's daughter walked up the aisle to wed his rival—"Just a fancy, a boyish fancy, my dear"; and his wife smiles serenely and says, "Oh, yes, of course," with calm disregard of the night she stood on the veranda and said, "Forever, yes, forever," to the druggist's clerk. They recovered; therefore it was not love; and yet the man knows that if the doctor's daughter had smiled upon him he would have made her the same considerate husband he has always been; and the good wife would have been an equally serene good wife to the druggist's clerk. One absorbing love at a time is about all we exact of real life, but for purposes of romance a disappointment that allows itself to be mitigated by time is beneath contempt. We will have none of it, in books.

At the risk of irrelevances (which I have studiously avoided thus far) I want to warn the modern young wo-

man against a variation of this idea that recently came to my notice in a novel by a very promising and popular author. The heroine of this realistic sketch, who seemed to be in high favor with the writer, announces herself calmly as so much in love with two men at once as to render it rank injustice to marry either while the other lives. This hopeless predicament is relieved only when one of the men, with that eagerness for self-sacrifice that characterizes his sex, betakes himself to a remote island of the sea and sends word that he is dead. Whereupon, after a period of what might be called half mourning, the young woman marries the other man, only to have the first return, thus involving her in most distressing emotional complications. The time which I was permitted to have this volume from the circulating library unhappily expired at this juncture, and it was torn from my grasp; but I gleaned from an exhaustive review in a leading periodical that the husband suc-

cumbed to the hopelessness of the situation and took his turn at dying, whereupon the widow bestowed her left hand, so to speak, upon the other.

Now, frankly, I prefer the old deathless-and-eternal love-theory, no matter how fallacious it may be, to this sort of emotional mathematics; and I mention the subject only in the hope of discouraging any tendency that may be cropping up among young women in real life (upon which of course the novelist always draws for his material) to love one man with the right ventricle of her heart and another with the left.

Candidly, this whole subject of marriage, which has formed such a large part of fiction in times past, is, I think, destined to see great changes in the future. The vaguely distressing rumors, which some of you may have heard, of the great decline and probable decay of this institution I sometimes think you do not regard with the proper degree of solemnity. To

avert this catastrophe it will be absolutely necessary for young men to face the fact that they are socially in a very bad way. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that they must remodel their entire line of conduct and acquire a new and very complex system of tactics. To please a woman who is anxious to be pleased is one thing, but to please a woman who is so pleased with herself that she doesn't feel the need of your efforts is an entirely different matter. It is very evident that the hero of the future has no easy task before him.

As for the young woman, with this upheaval of all our former prejudices on her hands, would it not be unreasonable for us to exact of her the cultivation of her grandmother's graces? If the manners of men toward her and hers toward them have changed a little in ways that seem to us sometimes for the worse, is it quite fair to lay the blame always on her shoulders? Is it not possible that she is simply rebelling a little

against carrying more than her share of the world's morals, and may not the lofty scorn of her young independence prove in the end a more healthful influence than the helpless tears of her former dependence?

Whether it does or not, we must face the fact that life has changed for both the hero and the heroine. They, like the rest of us, are more or less in the grip of inanimate things, and it is unfair for us to try them by the standards of the past. The manners of the last century would be affectation in this; the occupations of fifty years ago have been taken from men and women alike, by the relentless march of discovery and invention; but the goodness and honor and devotion and candor of the soul remain untouched.

For the hero I can speak but superficially; he seems to me to have gained both mentally and morally since my youth. But for the heroine, both in books and out of them, I can say with sincerity and knowledge that she is a more gracious and helpful girl, makes

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a better wife and wiser mother if she marries, and, if not, a happier and more useful woman than the girl of twenty years ago.

THE WAY TO ALTRURIA

The time is past when the conscientious student of social conditions may ignore Altruria. The fact that it never existed, and never will exist as some have pictured it, does not prevent its widespread influence on the thought of today. Doubts have been cast upon the existence of Heaven and Hell, and yet the most rigorous doubter does not deny the potentiality of these two ideas in the world's growth. None of us are opposed to Heaven, constructed according to our own plans and specifications, but most of us have well-grounded objections to Hell; and in our efforts to enforce these objections we have not found it advisable to ignore the prevalent belief. Possibly the belief in Altruria is not so prevalent, but in any case it cannot be safely ignored.

Every man or woman who can appear before an audience of semi-intelligent citizens, harassed as most citizens are by the daily struggle with hampering conditions, and paint for them a seductive picture of social life free from daily fight with all that is evil in human nature and obdurate in human circumstances, is almost certain of a hearing and a following. It is far easier to paint such a picture than to tell the halting steps by which this blessedness is to be reached. But men and women who are tired of the struggle, more especially those who have been worsted in the struggle, are not exacting as to how, so that the end described be soothing to self-love and sufficiently brilliant to the imagination. Naturalists have repeatedly asserted that angels could not fly with feathered wings, but thus far they have had no appreciable effect on the average Easter-card.

A modern critic has said that the world of art is divided between "a passion for perfection and a madness

for reform." This might truthfully be said of social conditions as well. Society has ailments many and serious, not more serious than of old but serious nevertheless. Indeed it would sometimes seem that as the burden grows lighter we resent it more; we begin to ask, "Why any burden at all?" It is only those who are climbing upward that busy themselves in computing the distance yet to climb, and to them it seems long and wearisome. That we magnify the poverty, disease, suffering and injustice about us is proof conclusive that we are getting on. We will not admit as did our forefathers that God cursed man and assigned him as his noblest duty the patient acceptance of his curse. So far has humanity advanced, that we begin to peer through the mists ahead for the shores of Utopia, to think and talk of it as possible; to seek remedies, to resent our aches and pains, to listen to a multitude of counselors in the hope of finding wisdom. We have reached, in short, the "passion for per-

fection," and all this is legitimate and desirable.

Our age shows strange contrasts of the faith-cure, agnosticism and ritualism, of Calvinism and theosophy, of individualism and collectivism. We are all bound for perfection, each on his own flying-machine, or trudging along on his old-fashioned legs. And we are getting on. This point I wish to emphasize.

It has become so much the fashion for speakers and writers to draw attention to our social ailments that I think we are in danger of over-estimating them. Most of us have heard so much of the cruelty and injustice exercised toward the workingman that we are surprised to hear a carpenter or a blacksmith whistle. Our hearts ache for fear we are the oppressors. The average reformer delights in representing society on its way down hill with the brake out of order and a yawning chasm at the bottom. Orators do not hesitate to assure us that we are on the eve of a great civil

conflict; that bloodshed is inevitable; that labor and capital are arrayed against each other—in other words, that the muscle in a man's arm and the money in his pocket are thirsting for each other's blood.

In the midst of these rumblings from the platform and the press it is somewhat refreshing to call to mind the fact that thirty to forty millions of the American people live in honest, self-respecting content; that even in East London, which has long been a synonym for poverty and suffering, sixty-two per cent, according to President Eliot, "live in comfort with an upward tendency." In 1890 only one-third of the population of the United States lived in settlements of four thousand or over. The tendency to closer grouping is marked, however, and 1900 will no doubt show a decided increase in the proportion of townsmen to countrymen.* This is perhaps an evil, but the main point, that we

* This proportion, according to the census, was 62.7 to 37.3.

are getting on, is not to be ignored. We are too ready to accept the saying that "the poor are getting poorer and the rich richer," and we should save ourselves from the pessimism which seems ready to declare that whatever is, is wrong.

Not long ago I received one of those elaborately illustrated and be-decked New Year editions of a paper published in a western town that I knew quite well twenty years ago. The town had no boom; indeed, I do not think it has grown noticeably in twenty years. But as I looked at the cuts of the ornate modern residences I noted that nearly all of them were owned by men I had known as clerks, porters and mechanics in their youth. No one seemed to be grinding the faces of the poor in that town. The price of labor has not decreased these latter years, and honesty, industry, energy and all that goes to make a successful man or woman do not seem to be trodden under foot.

We are all aware of these facts,

and yet we are also aware of a prevailing dissatisfaction, a restless something which in old-fashioned language used to be called envy, but which in these latter days politicians speak of respectfully as social discontent.

Women, through the undue cultivation of their sympathies and the consequent neglect of the study of cause and effect, have become largely the originators of philanthropic activity today. Add to this the nature of their occupation, which permits of leisure and interruption, and we find them the natural leaders of philanthropy. They are the dispensers of charity as they are of hospitality. Starting with the idea of making their families comfortable, they have broadened with civilization into the idea of making the world comfortable; and with this in view they must of necessity study the discomforts of society.

Now a morbid contemplation of the world's suffering is in effect almost as bad as total indifference. Indeed it often results in that feeling of

absolute helplessness which is ready to proclaim all our conditions false and to sit with folded hands waiting if not actually wishing for a grand upheaval and readjustment. This is latent anarchy. There are actually in existence societies calling themselves Anarchists, who have reached exactly this state of helpless pessimism. I attended one of their meetings, and nothing could have been farther from the accepted idea of a wild-eyed, bomb-throwing anarchist than were the mild-voiced men and women I met there. "Nothing can be done, in our present conditions," they said, "the social structure cannot be made over; it must be torn down and rebuilt." True, they had no idea of taking an active part in tearing down, but their very attitude of expectancy was an encouragement to the countless agitators who were thirsting for the excitement of destruction. "Well, what else can you expect?" they asked when the strikers in Chicago were ruthlessly destroying property.

Now it seems to me that every individual who has in mind a state of society that seems to him desirable and possible, if he does not give us the steps by which in his opinion that state of society may be evolved out of that which now exists, should resolutely keep his theories to himself, or acknowledge himself what he really is: a dangerous agitator, a promoter of disease without the suggestion of a remedy. The cherishing of ideals that cannot be realized is harmful to the individual because it diverts him from the good he might accomplish, and it is harmful to society because there are thousands ready to seize upon his ideal regardless of its impossibilities and to hold others responsible for its non-accomplishment.

Everyone, then, who cherishes an Altruria is bound to show us so far as in him lies the way to reach it. And to do this he must not point us to paths that begin across a chasm that we cannot bridge. He must join his paths to those in which we stand, must

in short tell us the next step. Men start from where they are, not from where they ought to be. Of course, if one comes down to the bottom fact, we all ought to be as the angels in heaven, and absolutely nothing stands in the way of that consummation but the individual himself. The trifling fact that a large proportion of people do not want to be angels is calmly set aside by many of these would-be Altrurians as the fault of the state and something that the state ought to remedy: the criminal is morally defective and should be coddled by the government because of his defects; the drunkard is the result of bad legislation and should be excused from personal responsibility in consequence; the tramp is a problem to be legislated upon instead of a pest to be eradicated; in short, crime, vice and idleness are the results of bad laws and the question of individual responsibility is not to be considered. I am at a loss to know why the fact that under this same government individu-

als rise from penury to wealth and live lives of virtue and sobriety is not urged as a direct result of legislation as well as the contrary is.

While gravity remains we shall fall down when we lose our balance. Natural law precludes perfect happiness. Such Altruria as we may command, then, will be at best limited and uncertain. But in view of our present progress we may look forward to the evolution of a much better state of things. And as the first step in this evolution we must all do better work rather than less of it. It is poor work rather than lack of work that is holding the world back, and the only remedy for poor workmanship is increase of personal responsibility rather than relief from it. I hired a man last week to hoe weeds for me at a dollar and a half a day, and in the evening after I had paid him I found he had hoed out plants that cost me four dollars and a half. True, he was none the richer, and no doubt he found it as hard to get rid of a two-dollar plant as a

worthless weed, but the experience suggested to me some doubts as to the dignity of labor in the abstract. Labor is dignified just in proportion to the conscience and intelligence that go into it and no farther.

Furthermore, since the social discontent of today comes from ungratified wants, the question arises as to whether the trouble lies in the nature of the demand or the character of the supply. No doubt we shall find it a mixture of the two, and it is the duty of every thoughtful man and woman to aid in increasing legitimate gratification and decreasing illegitimate demand. To do this intelligently one must study closely the effect of certain possessions and deprivations on his own happiness and that of others, and ask himself seriously whether the objects for which thousands are striving—for which he himself is perhaps striving—simply from the pressure behind and about him, are, properly considered, means of happiness.

Looking the matter squarely in the

face, is it not incomprehensible that a sensitive, high-minded woman should wear an atrociously ugly thing rather than make herself conspicuous by adhering to what she finds tasteful, artistic, healthful and personally becoming? That she is conspicuous when she refuses to comply with the demands of the prevailing fashion is another disgrace which women could easily remove by coöperation and mutual support. I insist upon it that pockets are the basis of man's mental superiority, and I defy any man to carry his purse in his hand and keep his head level for one afternoon; and I here make my bow of profoundest respect to American men, that they have kept their respect for American women in spite of our countless insanities that go by the name of fashions.

When anyone tells us that the manufacture of all these unlovely things gives employment to thousands, we can only shake our heads wearily and think of all the beautiful

and necessary things these same thousands might be making to meet a wholesome demand—to make the world really richer. And no one has a right to evade the responsibility that is rightfully his, to increase by one the demand for what is neither beautiful nor useful, thus diverting labor from legitimate uses.

The worst of the follies of the rich is that of misleading the poor into thinking that the mere display of wealth gives happiness. Thousands are led into expenditures that bring nothing but anxiety by the constant recital in the gossiping columns of the daily press of details of fashionable folly, which the participants themselves know to be absolutely without pleasure. Now I will leave it to anyone who has once been poor and has passed through the intermediate stages to a competence, or to wealth, as a result of his own efforts—was happiness not distributed all along the way, with perhaps a more lavish bestowal nearer the beginning than

toward the end? I blame the would-be reformer, whether rich or poor, who attributes the inequalities of happiness to the inequalities of wealth. He has a narrow soul whose honest little is embittered by his neighbor's affluence, and he has a narrower soul who thinks his own affluence necessarily sweeter than his neighbor's little. It would be a terrible calamity to the world if no one in it were allowed to become richer than some of us wish or deserve to be.

The morally healthy take pleasure in the diversity of rewards. Acceptance of one's limitations is the part of a well-balanced mind. I do not know which would be more humiliating to such a mind, to be weighed down by its inferiors or to know itself a dead weight on its superiors. Success makes people happy, not wealth. So far as money indicates the accomplishment of one's purpose, it brings happiness in exact proportion to the beneficence of that purpose. But the man who makes a good cart-wheel or de-

velops a new rose or paints a good picture or builds a good bridge, tastes the only sweetness that brings content to the soul—the sweetness of giving out the best he has in store.

We have exalted wealth to such a pinnacle in our country that the poor man is gradually absolving himself from all sense of duty toward the rich man, and when any human being loses his sense of responsibility to any other human being he deteriorates immediately. Sympathy for the very rich is almost unknown; their sorrows, their joys, their most sacred and private affairs are dragged before the public and gloated over by those who ought to joy and sorrow with them. The conduct of the public in this matter indicates either that we have lost all sense of personal dignity and responsibility toward these our brothers, or else that we consider wealth a panacea for every ill known to the human heart. I suspect that ignorant people take this latter view, and no one harboring such an idea is or

ever can be a good citizen, a faithful employee or a just employer.

The Way
to Altruria

This unjust estimate of the value of money is fostered by the constant recital of the doings of the rich, as if the very fact of wealth lent an interest to the detail of their lives.

Why is it of more interest to the public that Mrs. Nabob gives a dinner of sixteen courses to as many guests, than that Mrs. O'Flaherty entertains her neighbors on corned beef and cabbage? And why should Mrs. O'Flaherty's daughters, who work in a candy factory, be led to think that Mrs. Nabob's hospitality was better worth chronicling than their mother's modest but substantial effort? Why should their ideas of the true relation of things be distorted by the effort of the newspapers to make it appear that Mrs. Nabob's entertainment was more extravagant and dazzling than was actually the case? Why should there be "covers laid for sixteen" and why should Mrs. Nabob's second-season gown and the diamond pin her hus-

band gave her on their twenty-fifth anniversary (and for which extravagance they are economizing still) be described as "an elegant creation in violet silk and crepe de chine, ornaments diamonds"?

The newspapers tell us there is a demand for this sort of nonsense. There is a demand for bad air, judging from the amount of it consumed; and for sour bread also, from the quantity eaten. But this does not excuse those who supply the demand; neither can you and I excuse ourselves for being in any way instrumental in furthering this false estimate of the importance of the doings of the rich. If we are a part of the demand for details of Mrs. Billionaire's divorce-suit, we are not one whit higher in the scale of social development than if we were eager to pry into our next-door neighbor's quarrel with his wife.

As one of the first steps, then, toward a possible Altruria we must acquire a proper estimate of the value of wealth. Witnessing all these use-

less strivings, these false ambitions, the heart-burnings and jealousies that have arisen from the pursuit of money, it is not strange that conscientious men and women have dreamed of doing away with it all by doing away with the inequalities of possession. But as the possession of things is not the basis of human happiness, their distribution could have no permanent effect upon it. What we all ought to desire is, not that all shall share alike, but that none shall want. If we are in a slough let us raise our foundations, not level our towers. And in order that no one shall want, the necessities of life must be abundant and cheap. But you will find people the world over judging their wealth by the price they receive for what they sell instead of by the price they pay for what they buy.

It is easy to see that good work well applied is the surest means of adding to the world's supply and preventing want. Good houses, well built and plenty of them, without

defective flues, with windows that work without profanity, doors that do not bind—houses in short that stand for conscientious workmanship—would do more to enlist the coöperation of owner and workman than blatant oratory concerning the oppression of capital.

The respect for labor which grew out of conditions half a century ago is rapidly melting away in the face of poor work and dishonest material. Honest workmen are driven to the wall by a horde of agitators who insist that the world owes them a living. And until those workmen come to the front and refuse to accept the dictatorship of their inferiors there will be trouble between labor and capital. There is no man of whom the poor workman, the dishonest mechanic is so afraid as of the man that does his work well; and under all his pretense of hatred of their mutual employer is hidden the fear of his skilled competitor, who would soon leave him behind in a fair field.

Every man or woman who has built a house, who runs a ranch, who owns a mill, who keeps a store or who manages a house, knows that poor work is the curse of society today. We move on but slowly and painfully because we are constantly stopping for repairs. We thought we had a door to go in and out of, a roof to keep out the rain, but the door sticks and delays us, the roof leaks, and the man that ought to be making a good door or a good roof for you must leave his work to repair mine.

I visited last year in an inland district in the middle west where many things remain of the pioneer life that my family had known there fifty years ago. In many houses I saw chairs of a pattern now out of date. When I mentioned them the owner invariably said, "Yes, that's one of Jake Walgamut's chairs. He made six (or eight, or ten) for us when we were married." They were good chairs. Jake Walgamut is dead but his work stands. In forty years no one has had to leave

his own work to remedy the defects in Jake's. There are six more chairs in many households today because Jake Walgamut lived. And they seemed to think more kindly of him in that vicinity than they did of Debs. As for myself I felt like hunting up his grave and erecting a monument to the early Altrurian: "The safety of the nation, the man who did his work well."

The kingdom of heaven cometh not by legislation. If every clerk and stenographer and teacher and dress-maker and lawyer and housekeeper and plumber and statesman and carpenter would spend one-half the time rigidly examining himself to see that he is the very best possible man or woman, that he spends in traducing the government and society because his reward is not greater than his desert, Utopia would be upon us speedily and surely. We should hear more of work and less of wages.

Every individual, then, who is making discoveries in science, acquir-

ing useful or artistic skill or promoting conscience, is working toward Altruria. It is slow. Evolution is necessarily slow. But revolution is far slower.

We should show infinite patience with the children, and uncompromising justice with the adult. With adult wrongdoers, not persecution nor cruelty, but justice. Every tear of maudlin sentimentalism shed over a deliberate criminal turns to a stone in the pathway of the child you are trying to teach to do right. The moment we begin to hold circumstances responsible for individual shortcomings we destroy the first principle of progress, we license all that is evil.

Every society calling itself altruistic that withdraws itself from the world to exemplify its principles acknowledges itself unable to solve the problem. But any society that finds aid in the coöperation of those of similar tastes and opinions is a legitimate factor in evolution, so long as it does not pronounce itself a solution, merely

an aid. Voluntary coöperation will grow with civilization and involuntary coöperation will decrease. The fewer obligations the individual is born into the higher the development of personality. The more obligations we assume voluntarily the greater our individual dignity, and the dignity of the state will always depend on that of the individual. All permanent good to the state must grow out of the development of individuality, not out of its suppression. And personal responsibility will always remain the most potent factor in the development of the individual.

We witness today the strange spectacle of the most conscientious among us joining hands with the most conscienceless, in Altrurian projects: on the one hand, the men and women who, seeing others deprived of comforts and luxuries, are eager to share with them; and, on the other, those who, failing by improvidence to accumulate, are eager to be parasites on the industrious. These two classes,

widely different as they are, occupy common ground today. And even if they were equal in numbers the unworthy would prevail in all their enterprises, because improvidence can undo faster than providence can do.

I would not be understood as underestimating the debt that progress owes to the enthusiast, the fanatic, the "crank" if you will; but I would have the world recognize that enthusiasm and good-will toward men are not synonymous with economic wisdom, and that the champion of the middle ground, who is always unknown to fame, is generally unknown to folly as well. To him is entrusted the carrying out of all schemes for the benefit of society, and upon him is heaped all the contumely of those who are rushing forward and of those who are pulling back.

All things are not good that have good for their motto. And no matter how commendable their motives may be, I believe that the influence of those who are teaching the people to look to

the government for a solution of all their ills is distinctly and increasingly harmful.

We have as yet no proof whatever that if the rich were poorer the poor would be richer, but we have unmistakable evidence that the effort of rich and poor alike to become richer has kept many of the poor from becoming poorer.

Every man or woman, then, who has the intelligence to discriminate between what is real and what is false in the struggle for happiness, who has the self-respect to cut off false demands in his own case and encourage others to do so, and who furnishes a conscientious supply in such line as it is given him to work for his fellow-men—has found the way to Altruria and is traveling therein.

If I were to tell you what seem to me false demands we might differ. There are many who conscientiously believe in seven-yard skirts, in ten-cent cigars, in docked horses, in gambling for vinaigrettes and paper-

knives, in a liveried "hired man," in teas of many colors, in silk hats, in no pockets, in middle-men, in formal calls, in champagne, in tight dresses (not tight but snug), in tall steeples and high heels. But however we may differ as to these things, I think we shall all sweetly agree that we like each other better, with all our follies, because of the freedom that enables us to be foolish as well as wise; and that when the day of sweet simplicity and frankness comes, the day of brotherhood of man and sisterhood of women, we shall enjoy that better by reason of its freedom—because it came by our own act and not by Act of Congress.

A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE

Possibly every age, every state of society, bemoans its own moral decay; just as school trustees since the beginning of time have alleged the unusual badness of boys in their district. Strangely enough, we do not find along with this any deep-seated conviction that the world is growing worse. Some of us, alas, are old enough to have to fight a little against the "when I was young" spirit, knowing that most things are brighter when one is young and that we probably knew less of evil then, as we knew less of everything; but even these, when we really think, recognize the general betterment of conditions, a betterment which assuredly does not indicate any rapid moral decay. Public institutions everywhere are better; the insane, the criminal, the pauper receive more intelligent care; man is

thinking of his brother man, and if morality has shifted its ground a little, it is, we have every reason to believe, only a part of the lateral motion which accompanies progress. That the ship's furniture slides about and changes relations but indicates that the vessel is making its way through a heavy sea, not that it is sinking.

If, therefore, we all agree, which is not likely, that there seems to be a lack of conscience among us today, we are not necessarily enrolling ourselves among pessimists, but are rather in the attitude of those who note the changing forms of evil that they may be the better prepared to defeat it.

Conscience, as I understand it, is the impulse to do right because it is right, regardless of personal ends, and has nothing whatever to do with the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. A very sensitive conscience may coexist with a faulty judgment and lead the possessor conscientiously to do wrong. Hence all those "well-meaning" people the cor-

rection of whose blunders make up a large proportion of the world's work.

Amid the increasing complexities of life it is not always easy to distinguish right from wrong. Those who believe that human nature has been fitted out with an unerring instinct—a moral scent rather than a moral sense—seem to me largely responsible for the ethical bewilderment of large numbers of people not necessarily nor vitally immoral.

I remember even yet with amazement the warning of my grandfather when I was about to leave home on a very modest quest of better educational advantage: "Be careful that you do not learn too much to be good," he said, from the standpoint of that theology which saw no relation between enlightenment and morals; which divided man into mental, moral and physical, mind, soul and body, and essayed to save the soul even if one lost his mind in the effort. If he looks down from the "gold bar of heaven" today, my venerable progenitor must

wonder a little that in spite of his fears I have not in all these years yet learned enough to be good.

A Matter of
Conscience

All education may not tend toward conscientiousness, may not increase the impulse to do right, but all proper education aids us in the discovery of what is right. And just here, I think, the confusion arises in the minds of those who expect, and are disappointed, that a man's morality shall increase with his knowledge. That it does not is in no wise the fault of his knowledge. To say that his immorality is the result of his information is about as logical as to say that his information is the result of his immorality. A navigator needs all the information he can get to steer his ship clear of the rocks in a dangerous channel, but all the information in the world will not keep his vessel from going to pieces if he insists upon steering it wrong in spite of his knowledge. Neither will the best intentions in the world compensate for ignorance of where the danger lies.

It is one thing to know what is right and quite another thing to want to do it.

That large numbers of the most conscientious people muddle their own lives and the lives of others, certainly ought to convince us that the moral sense cannot be left to itself; that it needs the most thorough enlightenment and the most careful training. And yet scarcely a week passes that some presumably intelligent parent does not say to me or in my hearing: "Well, I try not to worry about the children's naughtiness—I have always tried to do right, and my wife (or my husband) is certainly good and I think the children will turn out all right."

To know right from wrong is intelligence; to want to know what is right that one may do it is conscientiousness; to do right is morality.

We have a comfortable way of asserting that it is easy enough to know what is right but we really do not find it so. In simple states of society such

as confront the pioneer, where industry means but one thing and is required of all who have bodily health, the individual encounters fewer perplexities than wait upon him in more complex society. As the plot thickens and problems of distribution, intangible industries, middle-men, counselors, etc., increase, more intricate questions present themselves. Where large numbers of the population either honestly or dishonestly "make their living by their wits" there are countless pitfalls for the unwise and the unwary. We will all admit, I think, that more difficult questions of morals present themselves to the agent than to the blacksmith, and more delicate problems confront the attorney than the agent. Stupid conscientiousness is not sufficient for these men; a trained and sensitive conscience is demanded.

Business, with its perpetual tendency toward speculation involving others besides the speculator, and its unblushing desire to get something

for nothing through the ignorance or necessity of others, forever trembles on the verge of gambling and theft, and those who would keep their hands clean must have clear heads and principles well-defined and ready for use. Even thus armed we are full of doubt. Ruskin may have had us in view when he said, "People of moderate means and average powers of mind would do far more real good by merely carrying out stern principles of justice and honesty in common matters of trade, than by the most ingenious schemes of extended philanthropy or vociferous declarations of theological doctrine."

But the tendency of education during these latter years has been away from such austerity; it has been a search for the green pastures and still waters of learning, a disposition to hide the drudgery behind floral decorations. Our children dance into the kindergarten and complete their higher education with a "hop." Now schools are always the outgrowth of homes. Teachers are hired by par-

ents, not vice versa, as much that is written and spoken would indicate. And therefore if much of the moral training both at home and at school consists of mild admonition "to be good, kind to everybody and generally sweet and lovely," without any explicit instructions as to what is right, we must hold the home responsible for the moral invertebrate which results. Every teacher knows that a child who brings from home a knowledge of what honor is and a love of it, a knowledge of what dishonor means and a hatred of it, cannot be corrupted at school. But a child who does not bring this from home rarely acquires it in the stilted, conventional and crowded life of the schoolroom. If we will herd our young in fifties and sixties we must take the consequences.

Time was when the church was something more than a skilful combination of business corporation, lecture bureau and social organization; when religion laid no claim to ease and gayety and held its devotees to stern rules

of conduct—not always beneficent, perhaps, but chastening. We smile now at the faith which doubted the morality of all pleasant things, but perhaps it had its advantages; certainly we are tasting the bitter fruits today in many places of a religion which refuses to cope with unpleasant things and drapes the sharp angles of its creed behind tinsel generalities. The church and the vaudeville are not far apart today in their supreme and acknowledged effort to “make themselves attractive to the young people.”

As a matter of fact doing right is not an easy, drifting, effortless thing. Natural depravity is not more unreasonable as an article of faith than natural perfection, and in our rebellion against the asceticism of teachings which cast a doubt upon every natural inclination, we must not fall into the error of trusting nature implicitly. The member of a church whose creed is carefully concealed from the young as something in no way related to morals, who considers doctrinal ser-

mons obsolete, has no right to wonder that laws are so calmly disregarded and sincerity in business so rare. The one thing that has made religions valuable has been sincerity. Looking back over their long list of confessed blunders, it certainly has not been their verity. And in exchanging the austere dignity of the sincere though puritanical clergy of half a century ago for the tactful "promoter" of the modern pulpit, the moral tone of orthodoxy has certainly not been strengthened.

The reason of this defection is not far to seek. The advance of science and the dissemination of knowledge have weakened the hold of abstract theology on the pulpit. Fear no longer drives men into religion. The church must make a bid for the interest of the people. The growth of cities has created a demand for social centers, and the church availing itself of this, has become largely social. The commercial spirit which pervades all society has thus taken possession

of religion, and while many good people work in its cause from the best and purest of motives, the work that they do is entirely remote from the uplifting of society, being simply the business enterprise of maintaining and advancing the organization. The money necessary for this purpose is no longer obtained by grinding the faces of the poor but very often by patting the backs of the rich — which is certainly an advance in kindness if not in morality.

Indeed, looking society over today, we are constrained to admit that many of the sterner virtues have been sacrificed to kindness and brotherly love. There has been a distinct gain these latter years in tenderness of heart and a perceptible loss in austere virtue. In our anxiety to become our brother's keeper we have perhaps neglected ourselves a little, and it may not be amiss to heed what Ruskin says and devote ourselves individually to carrying out "stern principles of justice" and let the heathen rage.

Of course you will remind me that morality is altogether and distinctly social; that if you or I wandered alone on the earth, we should need no morals, since nature would suffice. But the fact that we are chiefly concerned with our duty to our fellows, in no way decides for us what that duty is, yet certainly at its foundation lies a strict attention to the individual personally committed to our care, namely ourselves. What the social nature of morality does prove I think is its absolute lack of dependence upon any system of theology, dogma, demonology or other form of abstract or speculative reasoning. It is our duty to man: a purely human proposition. If any nature finds aid in lashing itself to the discharge of this duty, or in discovering what it is, through any system of speculation concerning spirits or immortality or any peculiar theory of creation or any hypothesis concerning the unknowable, he has every right to make use of such aid. But my duty to my fellowman has no more to do

with the number of years I am to live after I leave this earth than it has to do with the number of years I am to live on this earth. If I am to die next year the fact could not properly affect my political opinions, and if I am to live ten billion years I must pay my note at the bank when it is due, or at least give it "prompt attention."

To attach to the problem of finding out and discharging our social obligations, which constitutes the whole of morality, a vast and unsolvable mass of theory and belief is confusing in the extreme; and there is no question in my mind that the teachings of Christ, which are simple and easily understood, have been often neglected or discarded by reason of the mystery and miracle thereto attached. Already these same teachings are coming around to us by way of political science and meeting ready acceptance under new conditions and unhampered by theology.

To say to a child, "You must do right because it is the will of God,"

arouses instant and unending discussion: How do you know it is the will of God? Is the message genuine? Have you interpreted it correctly?—and a thousand other questions ensue. Now, right is not right because it is the will of God, but it is the will of God because it is right. And we must confine ourselves to finding out what is best for our fellowmen by the strait and narrow path of human judgment and not by the devious ways of theology, knowing that when we have found it it will be something far removed from miraculous, some every-day matter of honesty and square-dealing and self-sacrifice, and that in doing it, that day and every day, we shall discharge our whole duty to God.

If any of us find aid in listening to an organ, or counting beads, or wearing a uniform, or in the smoke of aromatic gums, or in hearing a certain man speak every week from a platform, or in reading a particular book, or in partaking of bread and wine, or

being immersed in water, or in any form of symbolism whatever,—let us lay hold of these things and avail ourselves of their help. But let us not be guilty of saying that the man who does not need their aid is a sinner; let us not confuse the moral sense of the young by touching with mystery that which we should make plain, lest when the foundation gives way, when his intellect rebels against miracle and mysticism, such character as we have tried to build upon it give way also.

It is not a difficult thing to show a child that the security and happiness of his little world is endangered by telling lies, that absolute confidence in his spoken word makes life easier for all about him and preserves his own honor and peace. Indeed, it is far easier to give a child a reasonable reason for moral acts than to give him a reason for the faith that is in us, and explain to him the relation of faith and works. The parent who begins his crusade against untruthfulness by saying, "God doesn't love little boys

and girls who tell stories," is a mental shirk and deserves to be asked, "Why?" as he probably will be. Next week you will hear him tell the same child that "God loves everybody," that "He so loved the world," etc. Small wonder that few of us are clear as to what is right, escaping as we have from such teaching with a childish idea that morals are in some inexplicable way mixed up with Jonah and the fact of angels having feathered wings.

Morality is largely a question of ways and means rather than of emotion, and the fact that it has been so hampered by unreality on its practical side, from the disposition to deify the reformer and invest him with supernatural power and authority, and so exalted on the emotional side by the consequent cultivation of faith and feeling rather than judgment and reason, may account to some extent for the fact mentioned heretofore: that kindness and brotherly love of a somewhat gelatinous sort seem to

have increased among us to the detriment of justice, honesty, candor and other sterner virtues.

Love is a very pretty but very elusive motive, and yet we hear a great deal of it as an ethical force. Very few parents seem to have any definite plan for the moral instruction of their children beyond a weekly lesson leaf which may treat of the architecture of the Tabernacle or the climate of Syria, or if perchance it forbids stealing fails to tell some prevalent form of that vice masquerading under more agreeable names. Being unable to settle the question of immortality, a good many parents feel justified in shirking plain questions of every-day honesty.

Every teacher will give you testimony as to the appalling lack of moral instruction—not general admonition, not failure to inculcate amiability and generosity—but lack of parental instruction on the simplest questions of practical morals among children old enough to understand and appreciate the reasons why one

line of conduct is right and another wrong. A Matter of
Conscience

I well remember an early experience in the schoolroom which opened my eyes to this state of affairs. I was confronted by what every teacher has met: an excuse written for one boy by another. My pupils were in their teens and the children of average homes, and yet I found them alarmingly ignorant and indifferent as to the sacredness of a signature. They knew of forgery, yes; it was wrong, because you got money, generally a large sum, which seemed to make it worse in their eyes. But it was evident that very few of them had ever received the slightest reasonable explanation of why it was wrong to use another's signature or had been impressed in any lasting way with the sacredness of a name, except as it stood for financial gain; in other words, as they had read of it in the newspapers.

Children, if they have any sense at all, have usually a very plain unvar-

nished kind of common sense. We who are older may indulge in imaginative flights and emotional orgies and deceive ourselves and each other with half truths; but to them in their helplessness we owe the best we have acquired, and we owe it to them unadulterated with speculation and uncolored with fancy. What right has a grown man or woman to look into a little child's clear eyes when asked a question he cannot answer and tangle the struggling intelligence in the web of his ignorance? If you do not know, why not tell him so? If you doubt, why not tell him that? And if you only believe and do not know why, why not tell him that also? He may not be able to digest the truth, but at least you will not have poisoned him with a lie.

Morals would be easier to teach if parents were not concerned to reconcile them with their religion, or more properly, their theology. And while society needs all the brotherly love it can acquire, it needs along with it

something which will keep that same brotherly love working quietly in harness.

A Matter of
Conscience

The conscience of the human being may be systematically trained, and trained to nice distinctions of good and evil, but it cannot be done through the emotions nor by faith in the supernatural. It will mean a patient study of the needs of man and a careful discipline of self in supplying those needs; a just and impartial estimate of the individual rather than a wide, enveloping love of all men (who are certainly not equally lovable). And it must be done chiefly by parents, but not by parents who have hazy ideas of right and wrong themselves, and who desire their children above all things to "get on in the world," as the world understands "getting on."

Decay in the austere virtues of industry, economy, justice and honesty has increased the demand for philanthropy, and human nature's ready response to this demand demonstrates the change, rather than the loss, of

moral impulse. But in turn the growth of philanthropy lessens the necessity for individual responsibility and requires careful adjustment, and great intelligence must be brought to its exercise.

But having studied the needs of humanity as wisely and thoroughly as may be, and instructed our children and youth concerning them, we all recognize the necessity for will in applying this knowledge to actual life. Without heeding the doleful and irresponsible wails of the thoughtless concerning the downward tendency of man, we may safely lend an ear to the thoughtful and intelligent critic. Brunetière says, in speaking of needed reforms in the moral attitude of art:

Will would be needed, and unhappily we live in a time when — to give meaning to an old distinction that might be thought very subtle and very vain, and which profound philosophers have denied — the failure, or, rather, the enfeeblement of the will has perhaps no equal except in the increasing intensity of the desires.

Those of us who see a measure of truth in the French critic's statement may ask ourselves whether this state of affairs is not the result of man's over-gregariousness, his being a somewhat too "social animal"? Are we not disposed to advocate our reforms before we practice them, and feel aggrieved that the "procession" does not fall in with us? Do we not weakly defend our weaknesses by saying "but everybody does so nowadays," even though we know no reform was ever inaugurated by doing as everybody does? Do we not, in short, all lack the strength of will to be peculiar? I may be overstating it, but I venture to say that nine-tenths of us are at bottom dissatisfied with the plan of our daily lives in matters entirely within our control. And what do we do about it? Calmly set about conforming to our own ideas? Oh, no. We fret and fume because society does not agree with us and thus enable us to do the popular thing; we tell everybody what we think and demonstrate on

every occasion (in words) how superior our own system is; sometimes we hold conventions and pass resolutions and, having rent the air and "held long argument," we become hopeless and pessimistic and say there is no doing anything at all with people—better fall in with the current—and, having said this, we ignominiously melt into the average.

Now in all probability it was never given to you or to me to do anything with society or the world at large, beyond the influence which a rigid adherence to the principles which we have wrought out for ourselves would accomplish, and those of us who are thinking unpleasant things of the procession because it does not follow our route should reflect that the street we prefer is thus left free and open for us to proceed in, and that possibly, just possibly, a few tried friends may join us and we may thus form the nucleus of a pageant, the tramp of whose march shall fill the world with noble delight.

Whether we mourn the fact or not, I think we must all acknowledge that fear as a motive for conduct has disappeared or is disappearing from society. With its going much that was cruel and austere has gone and much that is genial and human, warm and solacing has come. The joy of life has increased. But while we perhaps all felicitate ourselves upon this we must remember that fear has sometimes a tonic effect upon the will. The man who believes that by certain temporary afflictions which endure but for a day, he may save or help to save his children from the pains of hell forever, will show Spartan firmness in administering those temporary afflictions or deprivations. But his harsh belief is not the only motive from which firmness of will may emanate; the fact that we involuntarily say "Spartan firmness" is sufficient proof of this. But when society is changing from one set of motives to another, there is likely to be a relaxing of one before a firm hold is established elsewhere.

We are tasting today the increased pleasure of life and a broadening love of man. The danger before us lies in the tendency to think all things must be pleasant or we will have none of them, to glorify emotion above reason, the esthetic above the just.

Most of us were nourished morally on the traditions of the theological regime. If we have ceased to believe in these, we must not expect to cultivate morals either by sham or neglect but by applying the truth, as it now presents itself to us, to life with the same vigor that has always characterized the application of error.

To say, "If puritanical belief cultivated firmness of will, why not return to puritanism?" is cowardice and folly. The march of human belief cannot be controlled; men do not believe what they will but what they must; and whether we rejoice or lament we cannot alter the fact that the human will is no longer greatly influenced by the fear of God.

It remains for us to set about

strengthening it through the love of man. A Matter of
Conscience

WHY PITY THE POOR?

The world has fallen into a dangerous way of calling the wholesome industry of life by hard names, and there is a prevailing readiness to find excuse for personal shortcomings in the "drudgery," the "grind," the "struggle" of everyday work and wages. We are all prone to regard "the environment" as something which hems us in, instead of what it really is—the trelis upon which character may grow; the scaffolding upon which one may climb to serener heights; the trapeze upon which we may take such exercise as will keep our moral muscles from flabbiness.

It is no doubt soothing to self-love to think that we would all fly if we were not caged, but the melancholy fact remains that if most of us grovel it is because we are grovelling.

We all recognize the value of self-

denial and hardship and untoward conditions—for ancestral purposes. As a people we are rather fond of pointing backward to the endurance of our forefathers, with one hand, while we pat ourselves on the chest with the other and say: “See what a fine, sturdy, and altogether creditable sort of person I am, by reason of a long line of hardy pioneer ancestry!”

Strangely enough, one of our favorite nineteenth century ways of proving our worth is to go about trying to divest other people of every remnant of self-respect acquired or inherited. Our New England originators fought a stubborn soil, a bitter climate, famine, sickness, Indians, and religious persecution, and out of the turmoil and hardship, and conscientious narrowness of it all they gave their children a heritage of strength, frugality and endurance. They had much to combat; but one enemy they were spared. They were not called to fight organized philanthropy. It is

not recorded that any "fund" was started to assist the parents of Benjamin Franklin as they reared their family of thirteen children in honest poverty. One shudders a little, following down the years, to think what we might have lost if Abraham Lincoln had been discovered by the "Society for the Assistance of Indigent and Deserving Young Men"! Imagine, if you can without apoplexy, a committee reporting upon your pioneer grandparents, or mine, as "a case of destitution"—a fate their hardships would certainly insure them in our day.

Why pity the poor, anyway? The only sting that honest poverty knows is pity. If no one felt sorry for you because your coat is patched, would the patch prove a discomfort? Wealth may be a means of happiness, but he who attains happiness without it flies over a mountain instead of climbing it. Pity the poor in spirit, the narrow-souled, the friendless; pity the afflicted, the bereft, the disappointed, and

when you have done with these, if you have any pity left, expend it on those who have only wealth to make them happy.

There is an urgent demand in the world for happiness. Not ecstasy, nor delirium, nor excitement, but simple happiness. If the poor are to be made miserable because they are poor and the rich are not allowed to be happy because they are rich, upon whom are we to depend to keep up our spirits? Heretofore the "fellow of infinite jest" has generally been, like Yorick, poor. The millionaire at his desk has not enlivened us by his wit as often as has the porter on the pavement. It is the impecunious onlooker who finds amusement in the solemn parade of the rich taking themselves seriously in Central Park. If, as some say, the American is coming to be known abroad by the sadness of his smile, may it not be because only rich Americans go abroad?

Certainly we are not a melancholy people at home. True we are not hi-

larious; but humor and hilarity rarely go hand in hand. A keen sense of humor prompts the possessor to take things quietly. No man has a greater fear of "making himself ridiculous" than the American, simply because no one knows man's capacity for being ridiculous better than he. If we have any national characteristic aside from the disposition to think we have many, it is the fear of being laughed at—a fear which has its origin in a readiness to laugh and a knowledge of what is laughable. Even our artists play about the edges of great passions into which the Slav and the Gaul fling themselves, because, being Americans, they are ever mindful of the fact that human passion, like all ephemeral things, perpetually trembles on the verge of the ludicrous.

If, then, the rich American abroad has a sad smile, it is either because he is abroad or because he is rich, for however deeply care and worry may etch their lines on the face of the American business man, the American

worker, if he be blessed with poverty enough to keep him at work eight hours a day, and wealth enough to keep him from worry the remaining sixteen, is a light-hearted and jocular sort of person. His wit and humor flash and bubble on street-cars, in shops, and on railway platforms, and his optimistic good nature makes it well nigh impossible to crowd or jostle or jam him into ill-temper.

As for his sister, the woman who works for money, and seems in consequence to have monopolized the name of "working woman," perhaps she *is* a trifle sad-eyed and dispirited. It may be that long years of prejudice have taught her to look upon idleness as her birthright; that the prehistoric man who offered support in exchange for maternity, failed to have his contract in writing. Or it may be that she does not go to work until losses and disappointments drive her to it. Or, perchance, the oft-repeated and much-denied assertion of her lack of

Why Pity humor is correct. No one knows but
the Poor herself, and she does not know that
she knows.

EARNING HER BREAD—AND JAM

Grave fears are rife among us that the American Young Man may be driven to the wall industrially by the ubiquitous and ever-encroaching Young Woman. To his honor be it said that the Young Man, himself, does not seem to share the alarm of his elders, but keeps on his narrowing way to affluence or poverty with a cheerful optimism which may be the result of youth, of sex, or of both. Possibly he and the Young Woman are secretly much amused by the doleful middle-aged clamor which is going on about them as to the probable extinction of marriage, and there is little doubt that many of their elders find inward comfort in the reflection that nothing is expected of them in the premises but advice.

There is always a comfortable ir-

responsibility in discussing industrial and scientific problems, since social forces and those of nature are generally beyond our control and will move on according to their own laws. Not all the talk of a century concerning the effect on labor of the invention of machinery has resulted in one machine the less, and it is not likely that any amount of public clamor will induce the Young Woman to vacate her desk or resign her ledger so long as it suits her employer and herself for her to retain them. She is not generally in her place from any higher moral impulse than that which actuates the Young Man in his; necessity, or native energy which, in the agricultural epoch of her great grandmother, found an outlet in spinning, weaving and butter making, and which refuses to be shut up in six rooms with an able-bodied mother and two or three full-grown sisters, is her abundant justification. When men were building cotton and woolen mills and creameries they did not stop to ask

whether they were taking away her occupations, and it is not to be expected that she should trouble herself greatly about theirs. She has generally found men quite able to take care of themselves.

But the wise and worried tell us that this heartless unconcern on the Young Woman's part, will lead to her own discomfiture; that if she obstinately continues to earn her own bread and butter, or, as they sometimes justly charge, to take her bread and butter from her parents and earn her own jam, she will make it impossible for men to marry and support a family. The situation is certainly unique. Assuredly, if the Young Woman continues to take care of herself, she will make it difficult for any to take care of her, and it is quite possible that marriage may be driven to finding some excuse for itself other than support.

On the other hand, if women develop a taste and ability for earning money, it will not be necessary for

men to earn so much, and the spectacle of the overworked brother whose pride obliges him to forego matrimony that he may support, not only a widowed mother but two or three idle sisters, may become a thing of the past. As for the much-maligned young woman who boards at home and works for low wages wherewith to buy finery, she is no more reprehensible, perhaps, than the young man who lives at home and works for such wage, low or high, as he can get, that he may spend it on carriage hire, flowers and bon-bons for idle young women. Far better let the flimsy-souled girl whose heart is set upon finery, earn it honestly and wear it with her silly head held high in girlish innocence, than to tax the public for reformatories. What if she does prevent some man from marrying and rearing a family of girls to repeat the colorless inanity of her own life? It may be well for us to care for the children that are born before we shed maudlin tears over the unborn.

The world cannot go on changing for the man and remain stationary for the woman. Desire it as he may, the Young Man cannot resume the occupations of his grandfather. An age of vast enterprises, of powerful combinations, of gigantic trusts, is an age of increasing salaried workers—an age of clerks. Men and women by their wants, their ambitions, their tireless activities, have made these changes; the changes have not made them. Manhood and womanhood, love and marriage are not likely to perish until something better is evolved. That something better will pretty certainly be something outwardly different, but it will be inwardly the same. Character manifests itself through circumstances, but he who confounds the two makes a grave blunder. If your daughter lacks any of her grandmother's virtues, it is not because she has forgotten how to curtsy and learned to ride a bicycle, but because you have failed to transmit to, and develop in her, the grace of soul

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which dominated her grandmother's life.

If the Young Man's one hundred dollars a month has become fifty by reason of the Young Woman's competition, there is little probability that the other fifty is being spent by her entirely upon herself. Oftener than otherwise it is supporting a modest household and he and she, if they be so minded, can live upon his earnings when that modest household no longer demands her aid. If their affection will not stand the strain of self-sacrifice, one or the other must be unworthy, and it is no great loss to society if the unworthy remain unwed.

The young woman who expects to step out of her father's house, which represents years of industry and accumulation, into another equally luxurious, must be prepared to leave off where her parents began, since inherited wealth is of short tenure among us.

The gently-bred girl has heard this

until, we suspect, she is growing a trifle tired of it. If she could speak for herself, which propriety forbids, she would, no doubt, astonish us by her unpractical view. In spite of all the worldliness which has been attributed to her, she rarely looks at marriage from the industrial side. With a conscious capacity for self-sacrifice, she dimly wonders why there are no men who inspire it. The fact that a man will "get on," which seems to mean so much to her elders, does not make him worthy in her eyes. Education, good breeding, gentle manners are large factors in daily life. If our young men are content to be mere money-getters, they must expect to be tried by their own standard. When there are men who will make poverty worth while there will be women to brave it with them.

The mercenary young woman is not often found among the very rich or the very poor. Her habitat seems to be that fringe of society where ungratified vanity and crude social am-

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bition have resolved life into a struggle for display. Much turning and dyeing and bedizening of old finery begets mental tawdriness, and the girl who will not escape from it by honest work, looks to marriage for her release. Is it not possible that she would do less harm in the labor market than in domestic life?

THE VIRTUE OF HATRED

Why a knowledge of good should be called innocence, and a knowledge of evil experience, is hard to explain. Wise men blush at the charge of ignorance brought by those learned in iniquity, forgetting all the good of which their accusers have no ken. Vice turned virtue is generally braggart and dictatorial, essaying to guide the steps of those who have avoided pitfalls. Character is the only garment of which the wearer boasts that it has been often to the cleaner. Men flock to hear a blatant "evangelist" vaunt himself on his struggle from the mire and all around are men whose better wisdom has kept them clean. "But the good men were not tempted," you say? Then go to them in crowds and learn why. They have something to tell worth while.

The society that commits its virtue

to the keeping of the physically weak, will always defend evil by calling good effeminate. Have we any right to wonder when callow intellects deduce the virility of vice? Society is suffering for a little fearless honesty. Legislation might rest from the suppression of evil if only those who hate it dared to show their hate. What save cowardice gives us the laughable spectacle of good men separating themselves from iniquity by a public ordinance and walking arm in arm with the offender? Loving the sinner and hating the sin? My good friend, the sin is the sinner.

Most picturesque of all our would-be virtues, and therefore dearest to the sentimentalist, is forgiveness. And what is it? A chimera. Your friend plays you false; what is he to you ever afterward but a traitor? You have forgiven him—you love him still? Have a care how you love falsity. But he is sorry—he repents? Love him then with a reservation, for part of him is not your friend. Not all the

power of the universe can get a man back where he was before he did his neighbor wrong. Every step taken in returning to the right path might have carried him forward in it. All the moral energy exerted in overcoming unrighteousness might have made for righteousness. We may blot out our share in his punishment, but his sin cannot be blotted out. Strange that man retains a moral sense in spite of all his efforts to strangle it with dogma!

It is humility rather than pride that keeps the clear-sighted from perpetually suing for pardon. The futility of the plea oppresses him. Wrong cannot be righted, it may only be avoided, and that is a matter of future conduct not of present words. It is better that sorrow for one's misdeeds should lie too deep for words, than too shallow for actions. The man of shuffling morals is easily brought to his knees. The valiant soul confesses to itself, does penance until death, and looks for no absolution. God and man

may forget my offense, but when I forget it the numbness of spiritual death has set in. He who asks that his sins be washed away begs for moral blindness. Far better ask that the memory of his good deeds be blotted out. Character would suffer less from the loss. Remorse is tonic, forgiveness is anæsthetic. The truly repentant cannot forgive himself; why should he ask another to do what he finds impossible? Why claim a miracle at the hands of his maker? That he does, is but another evidence of the colossal conceit of mortality.

There is no charity so popular as that which covers a multitude of sins and keeps them warm and comfortable. Tenderness to evil is very often an indirect cruelty to good. Forgiveness too easily shades off into connivance. The world may be so busy reforming the wrongdoer, that it finds no time to encourage the rightdoer; yet there may be more genuine philanthropy in smiling upon the good man than in weeping over the sot. A

little undisguised scorn is valuable at times.

The Virtue
of Hatred

The youth looking about for a career which will bring him most readily into social prominence today, might logically fix upon crime. The criminal is on every tongue and on every page. Government, education, conditions are held responsible and vigorously attacked. The individual is treated gently as an irresponsible effect. And yet man is, and always has been, the great first cause of evil.

Society rallies eagerly at the call of an abstraction. It is so much easier to build "rescue" homes than to close our own to well dressed vice. "Judge not," we say virtuously when we are too cowardly to follow our judgment. In all our analysis of evil, in all our wordy efforts at its suppression, are we forgetting the vital remedy—to hate it?

RIGHTS AND THE RIGHT

The man who is perpetually looking after his rights is very likely to be neglectful of his duties. What many are pleased to call a strong sense of justice is often only a strong sense of injustice. They do not love the right so much as they hate the wrong, and they do not hate the wrong so much as they hate to be wronged. Those of us who make our indignation under personal injustice the measure of our principle, should note carefully whether we feel the same wrath when our neighbor is the victim. If we are really at war with evil, our own hurts will not count for much. The man who is fighting fire does not stop to nurse his burns.

We should never collect our spiritual dues to the uttermost farthing. To have life in our debt gives us the whip-hand of fate. The penalty of

being square with the world is that we have nothing "coming to us." The individual is poor indeed to whom the world owes only a living. Two things we should all learn—to be imposed upon by our inferiors and to be helped by our superiors. Only by this do we discover our social status—our inferiors are those who can impose upon us, our superiors those who can help us. The American has been derided for his silence under small injustice—for being abashed by the hotel clerk, the conductor, the ticket-agent. It may be his spiritual coat-of-arms. There is nothing of which the great soul is more afraid than of smallness. The highest courage bears its own wrongs that it may redress those of others.

When men care very much about the thing involved, they say, "I care only for the principle of the thing." As if there were anything else worth caring about. Conscience has become so tangled with self-love that many good people mistake the one for the

other. It is not my conscience that hurts me when my neighbor keeps his Sabbath by breaking mine; it is my egotism. If he had proper respect for my opinion he would worship my God. His failure to do so pains me, but it is a headache not a heartache. A city ordinance will cure it.

It has been the fashion ever since Jeremiah to regard one's own age and people as morally decadent. "In these days" is our usual preface for sins as old as humanity. Perhaps we owe our zeal in "redeeming the time" to our belief that "the days are evil." Vice has taken on new forms with us but it has deserted some of its old ones. At bottom each age thinks its own sins an improvement on those that went before. They are more to its taste. For the purpose of oratory the capital that fetters and the competition that fells the weak are worse than slavery and bloodshed, but a taste of serfdom or savage warfare would silence the orator. The corpses of a few brave men are mutilated by their victors and

the modern world turns white to the lips. Compared with the future our age is perhaps "no better than it should be," but compared with the past it shows hopeful tendencies.

It is not well for individuals or nations to dwell too much upon their vices or their virtues. No doubt the latter are too few and the former too many, but the public as well as the private conscience has morbid possibilities. Whatever is wrong in our day and generation, you and I are at the bottom of it. One seventy-millionth of the responsibility rests with each of us. This fact ought to fill us with hope.

Social analysts tell us that we have more intense desires and feebler wills than our forefathers — tenderer hearts and tougher consciences; higher ideals and lower expectations. Certainly one might be born into a worse time than that of eager desire, kindness and high ideals, and it may be that, tested by these positive virtues only, do will, conscience and hope appear weaker.

During the last fifty years the world has been rapidly shedding its theology. During the next fifty it will formulate its religion. Heretofore the two have been inextricably confused. Our ideas of right have not materially changed, but many have forsaken the old reasons why. The command of God, the hope of heaven, the fear of hell, have lost their potency, and he who loved neither God nor man so much as he feared the flames, is released on his own recognizance. We have his honest immorality in exchange for his dishonest morality, and the former will doubtless harm us as little as the latter helped us. When we teach our children the right as zealously as our fathers taught the catechism, we shall hear less complaint of wavering consciences. That we have ceased to be afraid to die is no proof that our children know by instinct how to live. The moral sense of a child needs instruction, but it will not grow strong on the bones of a creed from which you and I have

picked all the meat. The best results of our lifelong thought and experience are none too good for its use. Above all things we must lend it the courage of hope.

The progress of society is not measured by its unhappiness or by its content, but by its happy discontent, and the man or woman who cannot go about his reforms with a glad heart should look to his own reformation first. The energy of despair is not a reliable factor in evolution. Works without faith are dead.

More and more the world is coming to realize the duty of happiness. Not the duty of pursuing happiness but of being happy—not joy at the end, but joy by the way. We should take our heaven piecemeal, with no thought for the morrow of death. He who can conquer this life need have no fear of another, but he who allows his soul to be daunted by losses, or failure, or the pain of living must stand forever on the threshold of hell.

“HIGH NOTIONS”

A little learning is preferable to a great deal of ignorance. Knowledge, much or little, never hurt any human being. He who seems to suffer from it, suffers only from ignorance of his limitations. It is not in what he knows that danger lies for the man of small knowing; it is in what he does not know. It is not the little learning but the large estimate of it that is the dangerous thing.

When we have got our highly specialized American, densely ignorant of all things but his own dependent craft, we may find him a clamorous and turbulent citizen; we may wish we had not exchanged for him the facile product of a no doubt faulty system, who aimed too high perhaps, but caught at something as he fell and hung on hopefully. What if he did try to be a lawyer when God meant him for a

blacksmith? The mistake was between him and his Maker, and he did not hold the State responsible.

“High
Notions”

It is out of the ambitions, the attempts and the failures, that we get our really great; and when we sneer at the aspirations of the crude and untaught, we should remember that it is only when they fail that they are folly. When they succeed they are biography.

If our youth come home from school with “high notions,” it is by no means certain that they learned them there. When “high notions” disappear from among us the republic will be dead and buried.

By no twisting or turning will the letters of democracy spell content. When crowns cease to be hereditary, crosses cease to be so as well. If a man may not rule because his father was a king, another need not mend shoes because his father was a cobbler. Eternal hope is eternal unrest.

Let your High School boy and girl try what they will, and fail if need be;

“High
Notions”

they will come out of it happier and saner and less of a menace to society than those whose ambitions smoulder under a dead weight of ignorance. Education is the safety-valve of ambition.

When we have no boys and girls with ambitions too lofty for their circumstances we shall have no men and women of attainments lofty enough for our needs.

When parents learn to believe, teachers will learn to teach, that education is a means of happiness, not of gain. When we at home have taught our boys and girls that money is a means of education, not education a means of making money, we shall be ready to bring a charge against our schools because our children come from them with undue reverence for appearances.

No one knows just what the work of the future is to be, but all of us know the kind of men and women who will do it well. Active, alert, industrious, courageous, conscientious,

hoping for the best and ready for the worst—these are the men and women our schools and homes should be making. Whether they do it by means of the classics or the forge, through the brain or the hand, matters little; but that they do it matters much.

“High
Notions”

JUST AFTER CHRISTMAS

Now that Christmas is over and each one of us has sent his conscience out as a committee of one to draft resolutions for the New Year, it is an excellent thing for the mental man, and an imperative necessity for the physical woman, to sit down and rest a bit beside the dying Yule-fire. And while one is resting, there can be no great harm in thinking a little—at least until conscience brings in its report and lashes one away from such unprofitable employment.

“One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found” who is entirely satisfied with her Christmas giving. What she honestly intended to be a spontaneous expression of regard, came to be a matter of book-keeping. She “remembered her friends” by writing their names in lists and check-

ing them off; and in her anxiety not to forget those whom she loved well enough to fear they would "expect something," she neglected many of those who loved her too well to expect anything. Sitting in the twilight she is constrained to take some of the ashes of the Yule-log and sprinkle them upon her head as she remembers how often in the whirl and hurry and anxiety of holiday generosity she has forgotten that "peace on earth" is quite as important as "good will to men."

At the end of this festival season many of us feel as if we, like our country, have just emerged from a war of benevolence, and although unlike her, we have shed no blood in our efforts to prove the kindness of our hearts, it is not unlikely that in our nervous anxiety to promote happiness we have made those nearest and dearest to us feel our good deeds very keenly at times. No doubt the near and dear ones are willing to be sacrificed for our better aspirations, else they were

not so dear even though near; and the aspirations are good, no matter how imperfectly we may work them out.

Most of our generosity originates in good thinking and feeling, even when it ends in injustice; and good thoughts and feelings, which are assuredly very prevalent in our day, are not to be underestimated as factors in social progress since they furnish the power that moves the world. There is vast room for improvement in the machinery, but very elaborate machinery may stand idle for lack of power — a lack which no observant thinker can complain of just now. When we have learned to turn our good will to men to account in promoting peace on earth the social problem will be solved. The happiness of mankind has shifted from a question of intent to one of ways and means. Unselfishness is in the air. If we have not good motives for our acts, individual or national, we are constrained to feign them. If we adopt a child from the street it must be to save it from evil, not to gratify

our vanity and support us in our old age; if we "acquire" the Philippines it must be for their mental and moral advancement, not for our temporal gain. There is, therefore, a lesson to be learned from hypocrisy, since men do not generally pretend until society has made known its exactions. And it is a good thing, however bad it may seem to us at times, that everything, even to the anomaly of war, must find its excuse in altruism today.

There may be a ray of comfort in all this for those of us who have betaken ourselves to the ashes of the Yule-log to repent of our Christmas shortcomings. Perchance the good intent of our holiday giving may have added infinitesimally to the uplifting of society even though its poor performance but swelled the list of blunders. Of a certainty those who want to do right may learn how if they be so minded, while God alone knows whether those who want to do wrong may help themselves or be helped by anybody. Next year, being wiser by

a twelvemonth, we shall do better whether that better be more or less. Women who are tired in every nerve and fibre from the season's demands, if they do better another year will assuredly do less.

Americans perpetually pay the penalty of their own invention. Ideas are not allowed to crystallize into customs with us, but are shoved out of the way annually to make way for something new. Even the stupid people who are without originality and if left to themselves would of necessity repeat themselves, have learned to expect a new spectacle at every turn. No merchant dares to decorate his window as he did a year ago, and the Christmas tree must bear a dazzling succession of new and marvelous fruits for every midwinter harvest.

Transplanted intelligence coping with the rigor of not over-fertile New England farms, developed an ingenuity which made the Yankee one of the wonders of the world; and the child of those conditions who had to do —

or do without — is the real inventor of the mechanical toy which your small son watches for a little and then turns from discontentedly to beg for some new diversion.

The extinction of the small farm in America, with its countless demands for originality and invention, its long winter nights of study and its long summer days of experiment, will be felt more as years go on. The children who invented their own play-things, made different men and women from those who are so surfeited with the invention of others that even curiosity is dulled.

And yet these children of the kindergarten, the Sloyd, and the manual-training school will not of necessity be worse because they are different. More restless they will be no doubt, with a tendency to feverishness from crowding, and consequent friction, and because of this it is well for us to keep a jealous watch over the simplicity of their little lives; to give them more earth and sun and air, that

Just After
Christmas

they may grow stronger and taller spiritually and a trifle nearer the blue sky than their parents.

If Christmas is in reality the children's festival, as we all are so fond of saying, let us make haste to simplify it, for it is we and not they who have made it a burden. He who makes it hard for children to be happy, by giving them more than they can assimilate or enjoy, brushes the dew off their lives and sprinkles them with dust.

HOW TO READ FICTION

Time was when they instructed or tried to instruct you and me in music and painting. Now they are content with telling us "How to Listen to Music" and "How to Look at Pictures." The day is happily past when "if a girl loves painting she must paint," and the vital force once wasted in the godlike experiment of trying to make musicians and painters "in six days out of nothing and all very good" is now fortunately directed to teaching the common ones of us to know music when we hear it and a picture when we see it.

But thus far at least I am unaware of any systematic attempt to tell a waiting public "How to Read Novels." I know there are those who are constrained to suggest that a little well-seasoned advice as to how not to read novels is more urgently needed; but

these should remember that some one must read even the bad books, to warn good people against them.

It is so much easier to decry a class of people or of books than to study and discriminate, that the moral croaker, who always prefers being ignorantly miserable to intelligently happy, seems to enjoy the idea that large numbers of promising youth are being decoyed from the strait and narrow path of what they call "solid reading" by the wiles of the novelist: such seductive and harmful persons as Sarah Orne Jewett, William Dean Howells and the like. He who contrasts "fiction and solid reading" as antipodal must bear in mind that Shakespeare and Dante and Milton and Cervantes wrote fiction; and while it may not be "solid" it seems to have some qualities that give it a permanent place in the foundations of literature.

But while it is very true that much of the careful workmanship, the force, the delicate fancy, the illumination

that once found its way to us through history and poetry and essays and the drama, today comes to us through the channel of fiction, it is equally true that the stream is muddied by much that had better not come to us at all. Having found the surest way to the heart, it is not strange that many undesirable travelers are found therein. But we have no safety from them save in our ability to discriminate between good and bad literature, and this ability does not come from ignorance.

To the uninitiated I suppose a story is a story and the readers thereof a dissipated class, who partake of unrealities as a drunkard of drink—to drown realities. That there is such a class one is forced to admit if one would logically account for the mass of hopeless crudity, or worse, annually put forth under the name of fiction. But these readers are as far from the discriminating novel-reader as the devotee of the nickelodeon from the lover of Shakespearean drama.

I remember a scholarly scientist

who devoted the day spent on a railway train delayed by a wreck in delighted absorption of his first and only novel. It was procured as a last resort from the train-boy, and was called "The Brazen Lily, or Tried by Fire." To his untutored palate it had a new and exquisite flavor, and thereafter, whenever the subject of fiction came up, he would turn an eager gaze upon those present and ask, "Have you read *The Brazen Lily*?" Oft-repeated disappointment in the response failed to rob his voice of enthusiasm as he said, "Well, you ought to read it. It's one of the grandest books ever written."

We walk among our fellow-men as we walk among flowers and weeds, experiencing delight or aversion without knowledge: human characteristics go unclassified and unaccounted for by the great mass of observers.

I have seen a young woman, faultlessly clad, obliged to seat herself in a crowded train beside a man whose unique dress and strongly marked old

face made him worth ten thousand Velasquez or Rembrandt heads to look at, and whose quaint speech if one could hear it would be rich with the terse richness of those who draw their vigor from the earth itself. And how did the young woman sit? On the edge of the seat, turned a little, for fear the traveling world might identify her with her companion. And what was she doing? Reading "Lorna Doone." And tomorrow she will tell me she thinks John Ridd "the most magnificent character in fiction." Possibly she was riding beside him while she read, and wished him at the North Pole because he wore overalls and suggested tobacco.

It is well for such young women that there are Blackmores, to

"make [their] vision sane and clear
That [they] may see what beauty clings
In common forms, and find the soul
Of unregarded things."

For, bye and bye, with much reading, they will fall to thinking; and even though they may never know human

nature as the artist knows it, they will know that they do not know, and perhaps they will grow respectful toward humanity in consequence.

There are those who venture an opinion on a novel as freely as on a pudding, and who consider that "knowing what one likes" is sufficient preparation for intelligent criticism. Indeed, those very superior souls who "never read novels" are always the most bitter in their denunciation of them; and I have known two men to spend half an hour in discussing the evil of "light reading" who had read nothing but newspapers for ten years. Ignorance of the other arts is generally supposed to develop a certain reticence in the expression of opinion concerning them; it is not likely that one who, knowing nothing of music, should drop in on a Paderewski recital would be greatly delighted or would venture an opinion on the merits of the performance; but the man or woman who cannot appreciate good fiction seems disposed to flaunt the de-

ficiency. People who do not read poetry or essays or history or science or the classic drama generally keep these limitations modestly in the background if, indeed, they do not deny them; but those who say, "I never read novels," always say it with that peculiar final snap of the jaws that indicates a sense of superior virtue; and this self-approval seems not a whit modified in those that read nothing at all.

To those that read novels merely for amusement or, as they say, "to pass the time," I have not a word to say. To find pleasure of the keenest sort in any pursuit is very different from pursuing anything only for pleasure.

The question is not how many but what kind of novels. Taste for the highest and best is never, can never become a dissipation; and the young person who devours trashy fiction is usually the child of those that condemn without knowledge.

Much concern is manifested in

various quarters over the large percentage of fiction in our public libraries, but in all the wails over this very reasonable and natural fact almost nothing is said of the character of the fiction circulated, whose significance might appear were some careful statistics at our disposal. These would show at the outset the absence of the most alarming feature, for our libraries do not contain the lowest type of fiction, although they do of necessity (being no better than the people that support them) provide much that is of indifferent worth. The inquiry would next show a large proportion of those borrowing novels to be also readers of general literature—essays, travels, biography, history; for one cannot have a cultivated taste in one department of literature without a generous interest in all others.

Frowned upon by the pulpit and viewed askance by the schoolmaster, the novel has yet gone steadily forward in public esteem, until today the man (I believe it is generally a man)

who announces that he "never reads fiction" thereby forfeits his claim to general culture. The progress of the world is marked by the interest of man in his fellow-man, and however history, statistics, theoretical economics and sociology may serve to enlighten the mind of man concerning life—the joys, the sorrows, the aspirations, the disappointments and the successes of his fellows—above them all, as a source of such enlightenment, we must place the conscientious novel.

The "conscientious" novel, I say; for, if morality is observance of the true relations of things, the writer who gives us a distorted view of human nature is answerable for a grievous sin. For men and women get their ideas of human nature chiefly from books, despite the prevalent belief to the contrary. Not one individual in a thousand is able to deduce anything definite from the mass of human phenomena that surrounds him.

It follows that one cannot write

worthily of what one knows superficially or by hearsay. The stuff of which conditions and incidents are made must be as ready to the novelist's hand as the paint to the painter, clay to the potter. When, therefore, a writer goes out of the life he has lived into the life of which he is a spectator only, the soul goes out of his work.

"A Window in Thrums," to take a charming bit of fiction, is unquestionably a work of pure imagination; but the stuff from which that imaginary picture of real life is made came out of the life of the author. And we all know how refreshing its natural flavor is, compared with the fermentation of almost everything else that Barrie has written.

Books that become the fad are generally, some one has said, either bad art or bad morals. He might have omitted the bad art, for bad art *is* bad morals. The book seized upon with frenzy by the general public is preeminently the novel of today—but not of tomorrow. It is made of what

the mass of readers wish were true; and their wishes will change tomorrow and with them their taste; the truth alone will remain.

How to
Read Fiction

In the wake of the simple and serious realism of Tolstoi and the other Russians who with sombre conscientiousness told the story of human life as they saw it, came a horde of would-be realists who said, "These men are great and they have written of evil; let me but write of evil and I shall be great." And following in their train has come the ethical novel which in its effort to popularize reform too often succeeds only in popularizing vice. All of these—the pessimist, the morbid historian of crime, the hysterical symbolist—are temporary; they are the tramps and hangers-on of literary progress. And because the world is tiring of them (the only world that has ever found them other than tiresome) there are hasty prophets abroad who tell us that we are to have a revival of romanticism. There will doubtless be a revival of something,

and possibly that something may be romanticism. That the highest truth is compatible with the highest imagination, is thereby indeed revealed, is a lesson that the best critics have learned and taught us. Both of these go to make the novelist of the future. And to the man or woman to whom it is given to show us our brother, to reveal the humanity that lies beneath the unpromising exteriors, to open for us the recesses of human motives, to trace the threads of human influences—to this man or woman we shall do ever-increasing honor.

Oh yes, you will say, genius! But what about the great mass of novels that are not the product of genius, that are out of focus, indifferently written, unreal? Shall we toil through these for the sake of the occasional "find"?

Through them, no; but among them, yes. What is life but the pursuit of perfection, and what is pure joy but rewarded search? After all, is it any worse than the other scien-

tific pursuits: the dragging of the ocean-bed and bringing up masses of life to be overhauled for the bliss of a discovery; the patient clipping away of uninteresting limestone to release a new crinoid—the endless search among the known in quest of the great unknown? Why sit lazily by and let posterity decide for us what is great? Why fear to risk our judgment on the present? The value of the study of human life as recorded in the best fiction makes it quite worth while to be able to recognize the best fiction when found; and as the test is always at hand there is no reason why conscientious readers should not learn to apply it.

The test of good fiction is beyond question its veracity, and to apply this test one must cultivate his own powers of observation, must learn to look at life with steady, unprejudiced eyes, must lay aside what he wishes were true and satisfy his soul with what is true. By true I do not of course mean in detail but in proportion. And by

properly proportioned fiction I mean that which stands the test of human experience—a test quite as readily applied to romantic as to realistic literature.

The educated taste succumbs at once to properly proportioned fiction, be it realism or romance; each is convincing in its own way. There is of course the purely fanciful tale, which makes no demand upon credulity. But the unreal novel is distinctly immoral. Pretending to represent life it misrepresents it, gives results out of proportion to causes, makes bad appear good, treats flippantly serious ills, gives undue prominence to emotion, lulls the reader into the belief that what he finds attractive is true.

Strangely enough, even the ignorant are constrained to get their knowledge of life from books. The factory-girl and the milliner's apprentice cannot generalize for themselves. If they could, matrimony for them, reasoning by analogy, would mean hard work, narrow economy, days of weariness

lighted up by occasional joys, the love and the loss of children, reason for gladness if they escape unkindness or neglect—the life, in short, that their mothers have led.

To escape this picture, against which their fancy rebels, we find them eagerly following the fate of ignorant but beautiful maidens snatched from the cruel embrace of poverty by high-born suitors, and living thereafter tenderly loved and thickly encrusted with diamonds—a fate set forth in the pages of the countless cheap publications whose titles and whose authors are utterly without interest to you and me save as they prove the universal human preference for the story above all other forms of writing.

And since this preference is universal, why not accord it the dignity it deserves? Human instinct is not to be despised, and if ignorant and learned alike feel the influence of any force, there can be little doubt of its value. Name the ten great books of the world, and see how many of them are

fiction. Name fifty authors who are secure in the hearts of the people and see how many of those who are not poets are novelists, or dramatists, which is the same thing. There is no more reason for wholesale condemnation of fiction, or even for an attitude of condescension toward it, because much that is worthless assumes that form, than there is for the same attitude toward the essay because many newspapers contain poor editorials.

And speaking of newspapers, why is it that the man, even very much above the average, who mentions his wife's interest in novels with a patronizing smile, makes no apology for the hours he spends on the daily papers, which are often fiction and very poor fiction at that? Is it possible that reading the production of crude young reporters, whose desire for sensation is greater than their love for truth, and whose literary style is a mixture of modern slang and ancient platitudes, is a virile and strengthening occupation, whereas perusing the works

of Howells and James, Hardy and Meredith, not to mention Thackeray, Scott, Dickens, George Eliot, Pérez Galdós, Tolstoi, Balzac, Kielland, Giacosa, is enervating and effeminate?

I am willing to allow that a man may succeed in life without being a novel-reader, but I am very certain that he will not fully enjoy his success. All the thoroughly happy people I have known read novels. Their happiness may not have resulted entirely from their choice of literature, but admitting that it did not, the conclusion is untouched that the novel-reading temperament is the happy temperament. Of course one now and then meets an unhappy reader of fiction. But this human phenomenon is no doubt saved from suicidal misery by his one redeeming interest. Or it may be he reads merely to write reviews.

All this is easy to explain. In a world of mystery, a willy-nilly existence unsolved and unsolvable, the individual who cannot find amusement

in the antics of his fellow-creatures, who takes himself and them forever seriously, who refuses to be pleased by the spectacle, who is persistently strenuous, who cannot enjoy seeing others do what he does not enjoy doing—this perfectly reliable and doubtless praiseworthy and useful citizen is not, I regret to say, a happy man.

Virtue is no doubt its own reward, but different virtues have different rewards; and since we cannot make society do as we wish, the next best thing is to study its habits, observe its evolution, and convince ourselves that the moral as well as the physical world moves, and always onward.

To try fiction by human life is valuable mental exercise. It lends a new zest both to reading and to existence, and this fact explains the readiness with which the cultivated turn from any abstraction to discuss the novel. Those who are wont to consider such conversation trifling would do well to stop and question. The art of living is of universal importance

and interest. An unwritten law forbids you and me publicly to criticize our neighbor's private life; but public opinion on private affairs is an absolute necessity for the advance and security of morals. All discussions of human life as portrayed by the highest art in fiction are in reality discussions of life itself, and belong therefore to the natural and proper study of mankind.

Many and diverse reasons have been advanced to account for the preponderance of women among novel readers. Candidly, I am not certain that they are in the majority, but the assertion is so common that we have learned to accept it as true. Just how the statistics have been collected or who has done the collecting no one knows. If in public libraries, one must bear in mind that as men are otherwise employed during the day women procure books for them as well as for themselves. Allowing however that the statement is correct, may it not grow out of the fact that men have

been more occupied with the business of making a living than with the art of living; and is it not another evidence that the social conscience is rather too largely feminine? Instead of treating it as a feminine weakness I am disposed to regard it as a masculine limitation.

Speaking frankly of the difference in the conversation of cultivated men and women, I have found that one must keep very close to material facts to insure a man's interest, while women discuss principles, usually through the medium of fiction. Men that read novels are almost without exception conversationally delightful.

No one can read fiction properly who is not appreciative of the writer's art. To read for the story alone is like eating to satisfy hunger with no sense of taste. These are the readers who if they are frivolous minded mourn because a tale does not "turn out well," or because it does not point a moral if they are serious. It is very bad art that has to label itself, and human life,

to teach no lesson, must be very imperfectly represented. As a writer's own morals are best displayed by his character, the morals of his book are best taught by his characters; if his concern is not with them but with preaching, let him lay down his pen and enter the pulpit.

Delight in the novelist's art is not acquired in a day, but this should not make it the less worth acquiring. If after zealous effort there are those to whom it does not come they must, I suppose, continue to read for the story, as there are those to whom music is only tune, poetry rhyme and painting color. I can only extend to these unfortunates my commiseration, even though I hold them in part responsible for the modern historical novel which was invented, but unfortunately never patented, to meet their demands.

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

There is a prevalent but erroneous belief that people read books because they like them. Just how a person can like a book before he has read it no one seems to inquire. Manifestly people do many things, among them read books, to find whether they like them or not. And yet, curiously enough, when we learn from the pages of an entirely unbiased periodical published by the publishers of the work in question, that several hundred thousand copies of "The Swashbuckler's Sword," a romance of the seventeenth century, have been ordered in advance; and later that these copies have all been sold and the public is loudly clamoring for more—we instantly decide that several hundred thousand readers have pronounced the book a success. And when to this evidence of popularity there is added a

half-tone of the unknown author in his study, or on his bicycle, or in his mother's arms, being a modest people and democratic withal, we graciously submit to the voice of the majority and proceed to read his book.

The chances are that we find it very bad. But remembering that several hundred thousand of our fellow-citizens have liked it, we crush out any lingering traces of taste we may possess and complete our task. The next month we have our reward in being included in another group of six figures that has added its voice to the public clamor for this new and "epoch-making" work of art. The book has become what the trade calls, somewhat ambiguously, "a phenomenal seller." Undoubtedly "The Swash-buckler's Sword" sells. I know this from personal experience, having frequently been a victim.

It is evident therefore that the reason why anyone reads a book for the first time is not that he likes it but that somebody else likes it. Of course,

having begun, he is under no obligation to finish; but if he finds it very dull his curiosity is piqued to find what so many others have found interesting; or his vanity is touched for fear it may be too good for his limited appreciation; or, being an American and unaccustomed to defeat, he makes his way through it in spite of obstacles, merely because he was foolish enough to begin.

In the matter of books at least, it by no means follows that the public likes what it takes; what it does is to take what it can get; and just at present it can get the historical novel. The ingenuity and talent of numerous writers is being employed in the application of the story-form to history. The result is neither art nor truth, and instead of being called historical fiction might much more properly be styled fictitious history.

To speak disrespectfully of any historical romance of the past few years savors of the impropriety that attaches to censure of the newly dead.

But without in any way underrating the ability, the industry, the sincerity of purpose that have gone into this form of writing, we may be allowed to lament their misdirection.

Fiction should be true, and to this end it should keep clear of the truth; but above all things it should keep clear of that kind of truth that comes to the writer by hearsay rather than experience. The fiction that faithfully represents the life of today, simple as it may appear to the reader, is by far the most difficult of production. This fact alone will account for the readiness with which many writers, some of whom are capable of better things, have allowed themselves to be drawn away from their legitimate art to the making of tales concerning the truth or falsity of which there can be no test. The reliable critic of the historical novel died before it was born; neither its writer nor its critic of today knows whereof he affirms.

The claim of the novel to permanence rests first of all upon the name-

less human element to which all humankind responds; but there is another and equally legitimate claim in the veracity of the picture of social life which it presents. In this each age must answer for itself. One hundred years hence who will care what we of today have fancied about society in the seventeenth century? Yet witness the interest that still attaches to the pictures of English life given by Fielding, Jane Austen and even Miss Burney in their day.

Far better that the talent of our own time should set about saving us from the ruthless pens of the twenty-third century, which may otherwise justly decide that the opening of the twentieth century has never been adequately represented and proceed to travesty us as we deserve.

The novelist that cannot make his own time interesting, that can find no phase of life upon which to throw his light, makes public confession of failure by turning to the past. Now and then he does it to display his versa-

tility, but oftener I think he does it because it is easier to do, or because there are others doing it, or because he chooses to call the public willingness to buy a demand.

The genuine novel of any time is a valuable document, a contribution to history; but the modern historical novel throws about as much light upon the life of the past as a fancy dress ball. That it will not long prevail goes without saying, for a certain American public requires as frequent changes in its fiction as in its breakfast-foods, and selects both by the same method—from advertisements.

In our youth there were publications called yellow-back novels, in which pirates and banditti, wild Indians and highwaymen, curdled the blood to that consistency which youth seems to find thrilling; and now that we are old, or at least older, we have the historical romance, which invites us to slide about on decks slippery with gore, witness the most excruciating tortures and wade after the hero

through rivers of blood until he clasps the fainting heroine in his velvet arms slashed with satin, and declares his love in twentieth century English mixed with seventeenth century slang.

No amount of study, of hunting over libraries or delving into musty volumes will acquaint one with more than the husk of the life once lived. The atmosphere of that life perished with it. And as the true novel is a selection of detail by one permeated with the life of which it is the manifestation, the time that produces no adequate chronicler must go unchronicled.

If, even in our time, the writer of one nation finds it quite impossible by study, and well-nigh impossible by long residence, to take on the atmosphere of another civilization which is at his very door, how shall he do anything with that which is gone?

Our own Spanish-American life in Southern California, a life full of romance and adventure, has never yet

been adequately reproduced in fiction; and until there arise among the people who by birth and tradition are a part of that life, an artist to portray it, it must and should remain untouched. We know much of it from the records available; what we do not know we can never learn from tampering with those records.

There is far too much written in these days of ready pens and eager readers; and as it is not the number who are reading a book, but the number who will reread it that establishes its claim to our regard, most of us will, I think, find life simplified when the historical romance becomes what in spite of its pretensions it has never been—a thing of the past.

WHAT IS AN IMMORAL NOVEL?

The day of cocksureness in morals is long past, and yet morals remain even more secure than ever. We are slowly disentangling them from prejudice and tradition. "It is written" is giving place to "it is for the greatest good." In some respects these two were never at war, since many things that were written were for the greatest good, and were written for that reason. Men will differ as to the greatest good, but not more widely than they have differed as to the meaning of what was written.

The time will not come when even the best of fiction will be the best for all the world to read at all times. Character is not always affected in the same way by the same influences, and a book may be therefore baneful to one reader and harmless even if not

strictly beneficial to another. The crude mind is of course more easily duped than the sophisticated, and this is true elsewhere than in the world of letters.

It is not likely for instance that parents will ever agree as to the exact time and way of acquainting their children and youth with the facts of life. For this reason certain books must always remain objectionable to those parents who are too indolent mentally to inform themselves and control their children, and who want society to do their work. Religious instruction they have delegated to the Sunday-school, literature they have turned over to the public school, and morals they would like to commit to the care of the public librarian, asking her to have nothing on the shelves that their young people are not ready to read, digest and assimilate—thus reducing the duty of parents to the payment of taxes.

Much has been said concerning the domination of the Young Person, par-

ticularly the ubiquitous young woman, over our fiction. Most of this has been said by writers who intimate that they would like to be much more immoral than they are, and few of whom could be. No real artist troubles himself greatly about his public; insofar as he does he is pandering to something lower than art. An author who loves his fellow-men will not hurt them. The author who loves himself, his fame, his greed, his glory, will do as other men do who love themselves better than others. Novel-writing is today a business with many people, just as much a business as money-lending, real-estate and insurance. It bears in many cases no more relation to literature than those industries. We are paying the penalty of having taught the wayfaring man, though a fool, to read. He clamors for what he likes; he (or should we say she?) stands with his dollar in sight asking for excitement, just as he begs for sporting news, prize-fights, vaudeville and scandal of the daily

newspapers; and he gets it because those who have it to sell want the dollar, or, seeing his dollar, they imagine his want and as soon as may be supply it.

These things do not indicate that public taste is lower than it once was. Public taste was always bad. They simply prove that public expression of bad taste has become common. If the Young Person is any check on this we should welcome instead of deplore it. But that he, or perhaps again I should say she, is a check upon the highest forms of fiction is absurd.

As one sin differeth from another in the minds of men, a given book will seem more or less injurious according to the reader's perspective. It is not the knowledge of evil that makes us do wrong, but an erroneous idea of the relations of things. Hence a book that distorts our vision is immoral.

There is great difficulty in procuring accurate moral statistics, but I have little doubt that a great injury has been wrought socially by the over-

supply of fiction concerning the very rich and the very poor, perhaps more by the former than the latter. To my surprise I learned a short time since, from what I believe to be a reliable source, that only ten per cent of American families keep even one servant. I immediately set about accounting for my surprise, and, comparing the statement with my knowledge of the life around me, was assured of its correctness. My surprise arose I am convinced from the prevalence of the very rich, or perhaps not the very rich but the comfortable, in American fiction. I ran over the current magazines and found fully nine-tenths of the fiction dealing with the servant-keeping class, and entirely too large a proportion of these belonged to those keeping a large number of servants.

Such misleading pictures may not seem immoral in any large sense, but I fancy the effect is bad. There are countless immoral tendencies in the hopes and aspirations excited by this

false estimate of society on the part of those who get from novels their idea of life beyond their own narrow experiences.

Furthermore, not all the facts of life are worthy of a place in literature as they are not worthy of a place in conversation, and the dignifying of them by giving them this prominence is a sin against the true principles of art. The mere writing about some things undeniably true makes them unduly large on the canvas of life. Perhaps it is the number of books on illicit love which is immoral, rather than their character.

Women are accused (whether rightfully or not I leave you to determine) of laying too much stress, in their definition of morality, on the relations of men and women. If they do, it is doubtless because the whole burden of these relations has been laid upon them, and naturally they overestimate the one sin that costs them so dear in the eyes of the world, and the one virtue committed, however un-

justly, to their especial care. I do not intend, however, to confine the word immorality to this narrow, as some would say, this feminine sense. But that there are a large number of novels dealing with this phase of evil we are all unhappily aware.

At the risk of irrelevance, I wish to say what I have been saying at intervals for twenty years without perceptible effect on public opinion—that women are quite as just to women as men are to men. They are indeed just to women where men are lax in their judgment. Women, it is true, do not make excuses for certain sins among women because they know that such excuses are maudlin sentimentality. Men excuse and defend each other, are “loyal” to each other as they call it, because no one of them knows when he may need the good offices of his sex in his own defense. And men are absurdly lenient to women, “charitable” they call it, because those among them who attempt to be fair to women try them by their own standard, which

I regret to say is not all that it should be.

What Is an
Immoral
Novel

I am aware that women are hard toward certain forms of evil among women, and I am rather glad that this is so. It is no doubt what has made us so very, very good. If we are to believe men, who are constantly telling us how virtuously superior we are to them, our plan with women has certainly worked better than theirs with men. Possibly the sauce that has made of woman such a highly moral and delicious goose might make of man an equally moral and delectable gander. The experiment is certainly worth trying.

Returning from this digression, let me quote Mr. W. H. Mallock, who whatever his faults cannot be accused of being either a flippant or thoughtless writer. In his introduction to "A Human Document" he says: "I believe that any picture of life if only complete so far as its subject goes will be sure to convey some moral or other, though what that moral is may vary

with the minds that look at it. It will in any case be sounder than any that could be conveyed by illustrations manipulated for the special purpose of conveying it; and a complete autobiography of the conscience of a single profligate, were such a thing possible, would teach us more than a dozen descriptions of the selected pieties of saints. Finally, if the book is complained of because people who are not technically virtuous are shown in it to have been ultimately happy, as such people often are, I would point out that their happiness, such as it is, results from qualities in them which everyone must admire, and not from those of their actions, which perhaps most people will condemn."

One reads such opinions as this with a feeling of being in moral quicksand, and yet the writer is unquestionably correct when he says that those who do wrong—that is, your wrong and my wrong—are frequently happy. But if we stop here in our analysis, the bulwark of our plea for

moral fiction goes to the enemy. We have so long insisted that evil deeds — which means of course what we consider such — should be represented as bringing their own punishment (a result that makes the recital of all immorality strictly moral) that we lose the very ground from under our feet before Mr. Mallock's bold statement. But is it not, after all, merely a question of standards? Doing evil — your evil — brings you unhappiness; not in the world's eyes perhaps, for the world may be ignorant of your sin, but in remorse. But, once convinced that what you do is right, even by mistaken reasoning, remorse vanishes and happiness is as likely to ensue as unhappiness.

Take the case of George Eliot and George Lewes. Few of us care to say more about it than that we are glad of a life, however averse to it all our traditions and prejudices, that unquestionably gave us the fruits of a rare and remarkable genius. Most of us perhaps have no fault to find with it

morally, however reluctant we may be to announce the fact, but none of us can deny that outwardly at least it was a peaceful, congenial and happy life. If inwardly it was otherwise, it must have been from remorse, which we have nothing to indicate that either suffered.

We all have the test of reality, of correct proportion, at hand. Life surrounds us. The fiction that helps us to look at it steadily, that makes our vision sane and clear, is good fiction, no matter what it deals with. For there is nothing in human life, sincerely and artistically dealt with, that is uninteresting, as there is nothing in nature beneath the notice of the scientist.

We all have the test of life at hand, but just why we shrink from applying it to our fiction no one knows. For example, a recent and much discussed novel makes a young woman of religious, perhaps superstitious traditions, correct life, good instincts—indeed a young woman whom the au-

thor evidently admires and expects the reader to admire—deliberately decide to fling aside all the restraints amid which she has been reared—respectability, virtue, religious teaching, love of kindred—for a man whose conduct toward her has been cowardly and for whom she feels, passion perhaps, but not the worship and confidence which alone would ennoble and dignify that passion. She is saved from this sacrifice of herself, saved outwardly that is, but ruined all the same, by what has existed from the beginning—her brother's love.

Now how many good girls, even moderately good girls, have you and I known who would calmly entertain such intentions as are put into the mind of this young woman, in the face of tradition, kindred, religious training and conscience? She was not deceived, her eyes were open, she deliberately chose evil, and not only evil but disgrace. And yet the writer thinks and wishes us to think her a noble woman.

Higher in the realm of fiction of late another young woman deliberately chooses shame for love of a craven lover, and is saved from bodily sin by a good young man who tells her that her grandfather is very ill. As if the illness of grandfathers were not an every-day occurrence, the restraining influence of which, to a woman bent upon evil, would be but a straw.

These women, instantaneously converted or perverted, are the cardboard-grasshoppers of which Mr. Howells writes: "so much easier to handle than the real thing, quieter under the literary microscope, skilfully colored, portable and, it would seem, practically indestructible. No doubt writers will continue to use them, as they do great wealth and other stage-properties, so long as the bulk of readers prefer to read of what seems mysterious to them."

After all, we have made too little of genius in the reader. He needs it almost as much as the writer. It is not given to many of us really to love life

—poor everyday life, the life upon which we depend for happiness. But to read aright we must love it, guard it jealously, and cry out when it is falsified.

What Is an
Immoral
Novel

IF I WERE——

At first I thought of calling this paper "The Reflections of an Incapacitated Reformer," and even now it is not my intention to leave any matter untouched upon. When one has industriously followed for a long time the business of reforming the world, it is really a great relief to be temporarily laid upon the shelf. To awake every morning knowing that society is going to the dogs, but that you, at least, cannot be expected to do anything to prevent it; to lie quietly in bed and think, "Now if I were well I should never allow things to go on in this way, but being ill I am obliged to trust in Providence"—is certainly, as the ladies say, "restful." And it is gratifying to notice that as you get a little better things do really seem to improve, which justifies the feeling that if you were actually on your legs

some sort of order might be evolved If I Were—
out of the social chaos.

It is a comparatively easy matter to manage the universe when you are on a liquid diet. The trouble begins when you get up and try to attend to your own business. Settling the Russian-Japanese question is simple compared with keeping ants out of the pantry or deciding whether you will need three or five loads of gravel for the front driveway.

These facts lead one to inquire whether all the ills of life do not arise from having to make up one's mind. There is a tradition among women that when men are very sick they are perfectly angelic. I do not know whether this article of feminine belief is known to men or not, but I trust I am not betraying the confidence of my sex in thus explaining your wife's manifest alarm when you display ordinary amiability. Personally, I have always attributed all masculine faults of disposition to the bad habit men have of making up their minds. I

If I Were— think the correctness of my view is attested by the fact that when they are so helpless that their minds are made up for them, they immediately become docile and sweet-tempered.

Now, women have so long been deprived of this privilege that it has resulted either in their having no minds at all or no ability to make them up, both of which results are conducive, I am convinced, to placidity of temper. And if woman insists, as she has recently been doing, upon cultivating her mind, I am very much afraid that she will go further and insist on making it up; and then alas for domestic peace and unity! The only way that I can see to avert this calamity is for every woman to make up her mind not to have any mind of her own to make up; in this way she can retain her supremacy and remain just the sweetest thing on earth.

As for men, I suppose they will continue to value, for themselves, every other kind of ability above amiability; and we must continue to de-

pend upon a chastening providence for glimpses of their innate gentleness. This proves only that doing has more charms than being, unless indeed it proves that men do not, after all, think so highly of us as they pretend, certainly not highly enough to lead them to emulate our virtues. When we consider how very good and superior we women are, it is strange that men do not envy us more openly. I do not remember ever to have heard a man wish he were a woman; and yet I have heard several men enlarge upon the surpassing excellence of womanly qualities, the wide nature of her influence and the superior advantages of her position, expressing the deepest astonishment, not to say pain, that she should manifest any discontent with the circumstances in which providence, with their assistance, has placed her.

If I Were—

These hopeless complications arise from having different standards of conduct for the sexes; and yet it was a man who stirred up all the excite-

If I Were— ment about The Simple Life. True, women had been working at the problem for a long time; they have tried to be as simple as men could desire. All they have been anxious to know was how to get rid of the hopeless complexities man's industry has brought about. And now to have a man arise and urge simplicity upon us, without telling us what it is or how to obtain it, is rather trying.

Life was complex enough before this problem of simplicity was added to it; but since it has been added, we must resolutely set ourselves to solve it. Thus far, Mr. Dooley seems to have offered the only logical way out of the difficulty; his advice to Hennessy is, "Ef yer poor, Hennessy, be simply poor" (which most of us have tried and found perfectly practicable) "an' ef yer rich, be simply rich"—which might not prove as easy, but which most of us would be willing to attempt.

Simplicity, then, is a state of mind and not a state of society. Complex-

ity is inevitable, and honest complexity is not a matter for regret. It is the artificial complications with which we daily surround ourselves that embarrass our lives. We are afraid to be honest; it does not seem to us to be the best policy. We are afraid to like what we like for fear it is not what we ought to like. The simple people are those who have confidence in their own instincts, or, as Herbert Spencer would have said, who do not have to vindicate the veracity of their primitive convictions.

Knowledge is too widely disseminated for individual comfort. We have too many sources of information, too many Sunday Supplements, too many Answers to Correspondents, too many columns of What Men Ought to Wear. Why, I learned the other day that "no gentleman could hope to find tasteful cravats or indeed anything individual and desirable in men's furnishings and neck-wear at the retail haberdashers; he must have them made to order to match his

If I Were— suit"! And I had been gazing admiringly at these articles as displayed in the shop-windows; and no doubt some misguided reader hereof has bought and is at this moment wearing, in sublime ignorance of his mistake and no doubt with some pride in his taste, a necktie (which he does not even know enough to know should not be called a necktie) bought at a haberdasher's! Of course, now that I have told him of his benighted condition he will find a new complexity added to his life. He will perhaps continue to frequent the gentleman's furnishing-goods department, but he will sidle in when I am not looking; and if I come upon him suddenly he will assume a wearied air as if he were waiting for his wife at the dress-goods counter—buying a dress she doesn't like because her dressmaker told her "it is all the rage."

I have always held the doctrine of total depravity responsible for the world's loss of confidence in itself. Now of course someone will suggest

that this doctrine might be an effect rather than a cause; but if doctrines are merely effects, what is to become of religion? I am disposed therefore to maintain that the belief in total depravity—or as the Confession of Faith puts it, “the original corruption whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil, dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body”—is calculated to weaken one’s confidence in one’s self, to make a man wobbly not only on his moral legs but in matters of taste, if indeed morals are not also matters of taste. How can a man who is dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of his soul and body be expected to trust his own judgment? Is it not the most natural thing in the world that he should ask somebody else? And even here his original corruption whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil, is likely

If I Were—

If I Were— to lead him astray. Ten chances to one he asks some other man instead of consulting his wife.

And out of all these complexities that have been ages in the making we are asked to evolve simplicity! How can women be upright when men have sought out so many inventions? The more ways you devise for making money the more ways they must devise for spending it. Not one person in a thousand does one-tenth of the things he does because he likes to do them or because he thinks the doing of them will make him happy. He does them because other people do them. Did people cease to eat with their knives or to drink their tea from their saucers because they found it more convenient to do otherwise? Were we driven to the use of finger-bowls because we couldn't get on without them? Did you stop eating corn pone and pickled pork and lye-hominy because you ceased to like them? We have been told that the male New Englander no longer has

pie for breakfast. Do you suppose he gave it up because he wanted to, or because his wife read in "The Care of the Body" that baldness could be cured by the no-breakfast plan?

No, very few of us do as we please or even as we think best; we do not have what we want even when we think we know what it is; but most of us, according to our ability and conscience, take what we can get. We all have a theory that we are the victims of necessity. We speak of "an independent fortune"; "if I were worth so and so," we say, and make the good example we intend to set when we have got it an excuse for all sorts of servile practices in the getting. We are afraid to call our souls our own, as long as they are all we have; but we all mean to bring suit to quiet title when we have made money enough to pay the costs.

I don't know of course how it may be with the rest of you, but I am well aware that I cannot make my life simple because I am a simpleton. I am

If I Were— morally certain that I could successfully run the diocese of Bishop J. and the bank for Mr. P. and the railroad for Supt. B., tell Mr. H. exactly how to spend his money and even successfully adjust the love affairs of Dr. T. And yet I, who stand ready and willing to do all of these things, am unable to make my dressmaker, who is a meek-appearing little woman, put a watch-pocket in my dress. I have always tried to keep a brave front but I fairly shrivel up with mortified humility when the young woman behind the counter looks me over contemptuously from under her leaning tower of hair and informs me that "there is no call whatever" for the thing I have just called for. And I am almost ready to venture the assertion that there is not a person who would be willing to confess his real taste in literature, to tell, not what he likes perhaps, but what he doesn't like.

Now how can people be simple when they live in constant dread of detection? We are not striving to

hide our guilt but our innocence. And If I Were—
right here I should like to inquire why
a thorough knowledge of good is
rather patronizingly referred to as in-
nocence, and an intimate and exten-
sive acquaintance with evil is called
“a knowledge of the world”? It seems
to me that there is about as much
good as evil in the world, and if the
Westminster Confession of Faith as
heretofore quoted is correct, the
knowledge of evil comes to us rather
naturally and therefore does not en-
title us to great credit, while it must
be uphill work and require some con-
siderable industry, at least for a Cal-
vinist, to acquire any knowledge of
good. If that which is difficult of at-
tainment is valuable, then being good,
in other words innocent, ought to be
more highly esteemed than sophisti-
cation. Yet very few of us, very few
men at least, take pride in being con-
sidered innocent, however much they
may resent being found guilty.

I have often wondered how I
should feel if I were Mr. Rockefeller

If I Were— and had all the moral health-officers of the country sniffing around my premises to discover whether my money was good enough to convert the heathen. Now if the heathen were to send a hundred thousand dollars to the Board of Home Missions to convert Mr. Rockefeller I should consider it their duty to take it and make the attempt. I am afraid they would not succeed, but it would not, in my opinion, be because the money was tainted but because there was not enough of it.

Talking of tainted money, what are you good men going to do about the money paid into the city treasury for saloon licenses? Aren't you afraid it is tainted? I mean of course those of you that think the saloon is very bad for men but good for business.

The question of what money has been doing before it comes to us has about as much to do with our duty concerning it as our condition in a previous incarnation has to do with our duty in the present. If I were a

college president I wouldn't go about coaxing for ill-gotten gain; I should try to make my institution stand for everything that seemed to me progressive, and if anybody offered me assistance I should take it for granted that my methods met with his approval no matter what his own might have been, and I should take great pleasure in rescuing his millions from misuse and devoting them to my own wise purposes.

If I Were—

Men have nervous prostration from trying to improve their circumstances, but women have it from trying to improve themselves. Of course no woman likes to do what men don't like to have her do, and how is she to find out what they like if not by observing what they do and doing what they like? For a woman to join a club, for instance, merely because she enjoyed it would be inexcusable.

I don't think women in general expect a man to know the object of a woman's club. But of course if he sets out to tell them what it is for, they

If I Were— are naturally interested and some of them are anxious to know. Now if Mr. Cleveland had undertaken to tell what men's clubs are for, there would have been some propriety in it since women have often wondered about this. But when an ex-president of the United States tells us that we organized clubs "to retaliate in kind," we begin to feel that we have a grievance, although we never dreamed of it until he made the suggestion. Personally I have never heard a woman make the slightest objection to her husband belonging to a club. It may keep him from home now and then, but women love peace and they would never make trouble about a little thing like that. Mr. Cleveland warned us that if we attended clubs to punish men for attending clubs the result would be that men would attend more clubs. Now the natural conclusion from this would be that men like to have women attend clubs.

Even Mr. Cleveland had no objection to women organizing for philan-

thropic, moral and religious purposes ; If I Were—
but if women are held up much longer
to these high standards they will have
to form clubs as useless as men's for
relaxation from high moral tension.
If I were a doctor, by the way, I
should cure nervous prostration in
women by suggestion. That is, I
should suggest that when a woman
has improved her mind to a point
where she cannot see a joke she
should call a halt. I am a great be-
liever in curing other people's ills by
suggestion. That is the reason I have
made so many in this paper.

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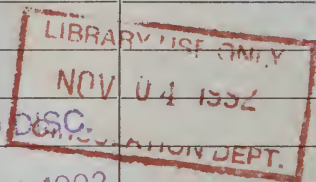
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